

# National Assembly Debates

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2006-2007) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN Part I of III**

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20th Sitting

14:50h

Tuesday 20 February 2007

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## ***MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)***

### ***Speaker (1)***

**The Hon Hari N Ramkarran SC, MP - (AOL)**

*Speaker of the National Assembly*

### **Members of the Government (42)**

**People's Progressive Party/Civic (41)**

### **The United Force (1)**

The Hon Samuel A A Hinds MP

*(R# 10 - U Demerara/U Berbice)*

*Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and*

*Communications (Absent – performing the functions of Office of the President)*

The Hon Clement J Rohee MP

*Minister of Home Affairs*

The Hon Shaik K Z Baksh MP

*Minister of Education*

Hon Dr Henry B Jeffrey MP - (Absent)

*Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation*

The Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy MP

*(R# 6 - E Berbice/Corentyne)*

*Minister of Health*

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The Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett MP

*(R# 9 - U Takutu/U Esseq)*

*Minister of Amerindian Affairs*

\*The Hon Dr Ashni Singh MP

*Minister of Finance*

\*The Hon S Rudolph Insanally OR, CCH, MP - (AOL)

*Minister of Foreign Affairs*

The Hon Harry Narine Nawbatt MP

*Minister of Housing and Water*

The Hon Robert M Persaud MP

*(R# 6 - E Berbice/Corentyne)*

*Minister of Agriculture*

The Hon Dr Jennifer R A Westford MP

*(R#7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)*

*Minister of the Public Service*

The Hon Kellawan Lall MP

*Minister of Local Government and Regional Development*

\*The Hon Doodnauth Singh SC, MP

*Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs*

The Hon Dr Frank C S Anthony MP

*Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport*

The Hon B H Robeson Benn MP

*Minister of Transport and Hydraulics*

\*\*The Hon Manzoor Nadir MP

*Minister of Labour*

The Hon Priya D Manickchand MP

*(R# 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)*

*Minister of Human Services and Social Security*

The Hon Dr Desrey Fox MP - (AOL)

*Minister in the Ministry of Education*

The Hon Bheri S Ramsaran MD, MP

*Minister in the Ministry of Health*

\*Non-elected Minister \*\*Elected Member from TUF

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The Hon Jennifer I Webster MP

*Minister in the Ministry of Finance*

The Hon Manniram Prashad MP - (AOL)

*Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce*

Mr Donald Ramotar MP

The Hon Gail Teixeira MP

Mr Harripersaud Nokta MP

Mrs Indranie Chandarpal MP

Ms Bibi S Shadick MP

*(R# 3 – Essequibo Is/W Demerara)*

Mr Mohamed Irfaan Ali MP

Mr Albert Atkinson JP, MP

*(R# 8 - Potaro/Siparuni)*

Mr Komal Chand CCH, JP, MP

*(R# 3 - Essequibo Is/W Demerara)*

Mr Bernard C DeSantos SC, MP

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

Mrs Shirley V Edwards JP, MP

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

Mr Mohamed F Khan JP, MP

*(R# 2 - Pomerook/Supenaam)*

Mr Odinga N Lumumba MP

Mr Moses V Nagamootoo JP, MP

Mr Mohabir A Nandlall MP

Mr Neendkumar JP, MP

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

\*\*\* Mr Steve P Ninvalle MP

*Parliamentary Secretary*

Mr Parmanand P Persaud JP, MP

*(R# 2 - Pomerook/Supenaam)*

Mrs Philomena Sahoye-Shury CCH, JP, MP

*Parliamentary Secretary*

\*\*\*Non-elected Member

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\*\*\*Mrs Pauline R Sukhai MP

*Parliamentary Secretary*

Mr Dharamkumar Seeraj MP - (AOL)

Mr Norman A Whittaker MP

*(R# 1 - Barima/Waini)*

### **Members of the Opposition (28)**

#### **(i) People's National Congress Reform 1-Guyana (22)**

Mr Robert HO Corbin

*Leader of the Opposition*

Mr Winston S Murray CCH, MP

Mrs. Clarissa S. Reihl, M.P.,

*Deputy Speaker, performing duties of Speaker of the Nat. Assembly*

Mr E Lance Carberry MP - (AOL)

*Chief Whip*

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer MP

Mr Anthony Vieira MP - (Absent)

Mr Basil Williams MP

Dr George A Norton MP

Mrs Volda A Lawrence MP

Mr Keith Scott MP

Miss Amna Ally MP - (Absent)

Mr James K McAllister MP

Mr Dave Danny MP

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

Mr Aubrey C Norton MP

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

Mr Ernest B Elliot MP

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

Mrs Judith David-Blair MP

*(R# 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)*

Mr Mervyn Williams MP

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*(R# 3 - Essequibo Is/W Demerara)*

Ms Africo Selman MP

Dr John Austin MP

*(R# 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)*

Ms Jennifer Wade MP

*(R# 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)*

Ms Vanessa Kissoon MP

*(R# 10 - U Demerara/U Berbice)*

Mr Desmond Fernandes MP

*(Region No 1 – Barima/Waini)*

**(ii) Alliance For Change (5)**

Mr Raphael G Trotman MP

Mr Khemraj Ramjattan MP

Mrs Sheila VA Holder MP

Ms Chantalle L Smith MP - *(Absent)*

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

Mr David Patterson MP

**(iii) Guyana Action Party/Rise Organise and Rebuild (1)**

Mr Everall N Franklin MP

***OFFICERS***

Mr Sherlock E Isaacs

*Clerk of the National Assembly*

Mrs Lilawatie Coonjah

*Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly*

### 3<sup>RD</sup> BUDGET ESTIMATES 2007

#### PRAYERS

*[The Clerk reads the Prayers]*

#### REQUESTS FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON DEFINITE MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

#### **Unreasonable and unconscionable dislocation of Vendors in the Stabroek Market Area**

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** Mde Speaker, I did write you earlier today. I think within the time specified by the substantive Speaker before eleven o'clock indicating that I wish to seek your leave today to move an adjournment of this House to discuss a matter of Urgent Public Importance as permitted under Standing Order No. 12 of the new Standing Orders. For ease of reference, rather than prolong a presentation in seeking to move leave, I will just read the letter for the benefit of Members:

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*I propose to request leave to discuss the unreasonable and unconscionable dislocation of vendors in the Stabroek Market area without notice notwithstanding prior approval of their operations by the Georgetown City Council.*

*On Saturday, 17 February 2007, small vendors in the vicinity of Stabroek Market were informed by City Council Officials that they could not set up their stalls on Sunday, 18 February as it was proposed to resurface the road on that day. They complied with instructions; however, on Monday morning when they assembled to begin their trading operations, they found the area cordoned off by City Constables, who then informed them that they could no longer carry on their trades at that location. The explanation given at that time was that the area needed to be spruced up for World Cup Cricket 2007. Some of the vendors who had arrived early that morning and had set up their booths were humiliated when their stalls were dismantled and goods seized by the Constabulary. They were subsequently told that to retrieve their properties, they would have to pay \$5,000.*

It should be noted Mde Speaker, that in a formal meeting with the City Council in November 2006, the vendors were advised that they needed to spruce up their stalls to enhance the area for World Cup activities. As a result of those discussions with the City Council, the City Council encouraged them to incur expenditure of over \$30,000 each to provide uniformity during the period of World Cup. This project which had the endorsement of the City

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Council Enhancement Committee and at which I am told that there were even meetings in the Office of the President was completed in December 2006. The vendors were therefore led to believe that after expending their resources, they would be free to ply their trade unmolested at the said venue. Inquiries have so far revealed - and these are my inquiries - that the instructions to the town Clerk and to the Town Constabulary to remove these vendors may have come from the Government itself acting through the Minister of Works, Hon Robeson Benn, Member of Parliament. In any event such precipitate action by the City Constabulary is not only unprincipled, but appears to be in breach of the rules of natural justice. Since the pretext of the removal of these vendors is the World Cup 2007, it is quite possible, Mde Speaker, that this may be the beginning of a large scale national exercise that could disrupt the livelihood of thousands of citizens.

Should leave be granted therefore, I propose to call on the Minister of Works to provide ample explanation of this development and the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development to ensure that decisions of the City Council are respected and not arbitrarily changed.

I believe, Mde Speaker, the matter is of sufficient importance to justify it being treated under the relevant Standing Order as being definite, urgent and of public importance, because only this morning, Mde Speaker, there were hundreds of people poised for all kinds activities, because of the hurt which they feel and I have

had to intervene to sooth very troubled waters and ask the City Council itself to see what they can do, but it is clear from what I heard after meeting a delegation with the City Council that the City Council never ordered this removal. They said so at the meeting and in fact they confirmed that the report by the vendors is accurate and that in a meeting which was held at the Office of the President, the Council itself was satisfied that they had authorised these people to enhance their stalls so that they can ply there during World Cup and beyond. So I think that this matter ought to be treated as a serious matter, because I do not know, next week we might hear it is Kitty Market; next week we might hear that it is Bourda Market and it may run the country.

I think it is a matter of urgent public importance where the World Cup Cricket 2007 may be used for anything in the future.

**The Acting Speaker:** Honourable Members, I have considered the claim by the Honourable Member Mr Robert Corbin, I am satisfied that the matter qualifies as one which may be properly raised on a motion for the adjournment of this Assembly. However, the leave of the Assembly is also required and I will now seek such leave

### **Question put**

Mr Rohee, you were seeking to ... *[Interruption]*

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mde Speaker, I was seeking to attract your attention before you took the vote.

**The Acting Speaker:** Alright.

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** May I?

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes, sure.

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** We may need a division on this, Mde Speaker. With your leave I want to point out that the Honourable Opposition Leader in his request for leave appears to be identifying two Ministers to treat with the matter which he has raised. He made reference *en passant* to Minister Robeson Benn, although I am not sure that it is Minister Robeson Benn who is responsible for vendors per se. I think the substantive Motion raises the question pertaining to vendors; whether the Minister is responsible for vendors as such, I think that is a matter which requires some consideration, but be that as it may, I would be prepared to be guided by your ruling and to nevertheless say that this side of the House would not support such a Motion. Thank you.

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** If I may respond, Mde Speaker, the reference to the Honourable Member, Minister Benn, is by way of facts saying that this is the information received that he may have been the person responsible and this is not just ... [*Interruption: 'Hearsay'*]... No, no, no, I am saying he may have been the person issuing the instructions on behalf of the government. It is very clear. This is what I said, but in any event, my Motion seeks to

have this matter debated and he can then speak on whether it is accurate or not. I did not hear myself so I cannot say authentically, but the point which the Minister raised, whether the matter falls under the jurisdiction of that Minister, is not very relevant. The issue I am raising is the authority of the Town Council to carrying on its functions and the rightful Minister being the Minister of Local Government, because it is clear from my meeting with a large section of the Town Council today, they confirmed that they authorised the people to be there and caused them to spend some \$2,000 and they are unaware of any decision by them to remove these gentlemen. So this is why I am saying it is a policy matter that falls in the purview of the Government and really is the issue.

**The Acting Speaker:** I am satisfied that it is urgent, that a large section of the public is involved and it is an important matter that has to be treated with, but as I said, I have to have the authority of the House. It is not enough that I am agreeing with it, but the Standing Order says that the House must agree.

**Hon Robert HO Corbin:** May I attract your attention to Standing Order No. 12 of the revised Standing Orders. My understanding of this Standing Order, and I stand subject to your guidance, is ... I am not reading Standing Orders Nos. 12 (1) and (2) ... I understand you to say that you are satisfied with the matter.

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes.

**Hon Robert HO Corbin:** If that is so that you are satisfied with the matter falls within that heading, I read Standing Order No 12 (3) to say *if the Speaker is so satisfied ...*

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes, that is true.

**Hon Robert HO Corbin:** ... *and either leave of the Assembly is given ...* which is what I believe you are seeking to invoke.

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes.

**Hon Robert HO Corbin:** ... *or if it is not given at least eighteen elected members rise in their places to support the request.*

**The Acting Speaker:** You are right Mr Corbin in (b) if it is not given at least eighteen elected Members rise in their place to support.

### **Question put and negatived**

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mde Speaker, I wish to reiterate notwithstanding my respect for your ruling, our disagreement having regard to what is the scope and ministerial responsibilities in accordance with Erskine May, which I would not wish to quote at this time.

**The Acting Speaker:** I have seen the relevance and I have quoted it. It says:

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*In determining whether a matter is proper to be discussed, Mr Speaker shall have regard to the extent to which it concerns the administrative responsibility of ministers of the crown or could come within the scope of ministerial action.*

That is the relevant portion and I am sure that is what you wanted to bring and that is what in fact has guided me that it come within the scope of ministerial action.

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mde Speaker, could we have a division on this?

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes, sure.

Mr Clerk ...

**FOR**

Mr Franklin

Mrs Holder

Mr Ramjattan

Mr Fernandes

Ms Kissoon

Ms Wade

Ms Selman

**AGAINST**

Mr Whittaker

Mrs Sahoye-Shury

Mr Parmanand Persaud

Mr Neendkumar

Mr Nandlall

Mr Nagamootoo

Mr Lumumba

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Mr Mervyn Williams

Mr Khan

Mrs David-Blair

Mrs Edwards

Mr Elliot

Mr Chand

Mr Danny

Mr Atkinson

Mr Scott

Mr Ali

Mrs Lawrence

Ms Shadick

Dr Norton

Mrs Chandarpal

Mr Basil Williams

Mr Nokta

Mrs Backer

Ms Teixeira

Mr Murray

Ms Webster

Mr Corbin

Dr Fox

Ms Manickchand

Mr Nadir

Mr Benn

Mr Lall

Dr Westford

Mr Robert Persaud

Mr Nawbatt

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Mrs Rodrigues-Birkett

Dr Ramsammy

Mr Baksh

Mr Rohee

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Honourable Members, eighteen Members voted for the Motion and twenty-nine against. It therefore complies with the Standing Order and we will hold over this Motion in accordance with the Standing Order. It will stand over until after 17:00 H

The Honourable Member Mr Corbin

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** We have to stand in our places

*[Members who voted for the Motion stood in their places to be counted]*

**Mr Winston S Murray:** No, no, no

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes, we have eighteen votes from this side and it is carried.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** But we are required to stand in our place. I just want to ensure that you are technically correct.

**The Acting Speaker:** Okay, in compliance ...

**Mr Winston S Murray:** We stand to support the Motion.

**The Acting Speaker:** I see.

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** Mr Clerk you have to count, we do not want any technicalities.

**The Acting Speaker:** I think the count takes the place of that, but we will hold over until 17:00H.

**The Motion accordingly stood over until 17:00H**

**MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR  
SITTINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND MOVED BY  
A MINISTER**

- (1) SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER  
NO. 28 (1)**

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*WHEREAS it is provided by Standing Order No. 28 (1) that a Government motion shall not be placed upon the Order Paper for the day earlier than seven (7) days from the day on which the notice was given to the Clerk;*

*AND WHEREAS a notice of a motion has been given this day, Tuesday 20 February 2007 to be moved on Tuesday, 20 February 2007, for the suspension of Standing order No. 54 (1) to enable the Assembly to proceed with the Second and Third readings of the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2007 - Bill No. 10/2007.*

***BE IT RESOLVED:***

*That Standing Order No. 28 (1) be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed with the motion to suspend Standing Order No 54(1).*

The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mde Speaker, with your leave I beg to move that Standing Order No. 28 (1) be suspended

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to enable the Assembly to proceed with the Motion to suspend Standing Order No. 54 to enable the Assembly to proceed with the Second and Third Readings if the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2007 - Bill No. 10/2007.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Honourable Member Mr Murray

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Speaker, I seek your leave to speak to this Motion and to say that ... *Interruption]*

**The Acting Speaker:** I should at least propose the Motion.

**Motion proposed**

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Speaker, I rise to say that the People's National Congress Reform - One Guyana has noted with concern the fact that this has become necessary to have to suspend the Standing Orders to treat with this Income Tax (Amendment) Bill through all its stages at today's sitting.

Mde Speaker, we are concerned, because this Budget was read to this National Assembly on 2 February 2007, when this measure that the Bill seeks to have this National Assembly approve was clearly set out in the Budget and there was no impediment to the relevant authorities namely the relevant Ministry and in this case the Ministry of Finance to have had this Bill laid at the time or shortly thereafter of the Budget Presentation after 2 February. If that was done, there would have been no need to seek extraordinary procedures today to get the Bill through all

its stages. The Bill would have been able to be laid with proper notice with more than adequate time and o today we would have reached the stage for a debate in the normal course of events.

Mde Speaker, I use this opportunity to speak in this manner, because it is not the first occasion on which the government has come to this National Assembly and sought to rush through a Bill through all its stages on the given day.

We came here only this afternoon to meet this Bill lying on our desks. We have had no time to relate the various amendments to the relevant sections of the Income Tax Act that affected here. Although it is fair to say that we know in gist what is contemplated in this legislation, but in fairness to us as legislators in this Assembly, if there was the opportunity for us to have had notice, then that opportunity should have been seized.

So, Mde Speaker, we do not and we will not object to the Bill going through all its stages at this Sitting, but I merely thought that we should place on record our disquiet over the use of this procedure unnecessarily. Thank you very much, Mde Speaker. *[Applause]*

**The Acting Speaker:** The Honourable Member Mrs Holder

**Mrs Sheila VA Holder:** Mde Speaker, I Just want to add the voice for the Alliance for change on this matter and

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want to correct the Honourable Member who indicated that we came in and found on our desks this amendment. That is not the fact. The Assembly started almost one hour late this afternoon, because apparently we were awaiting this. This was just served to us.

Mde Speaker, this is inefficient and I want to make it clear that we have no objection in principle to the contents of this Bill, that the people of this country are deserving of the increases pertained in this and we will support it, but I think it is important that we put on record that this Amendment is dated 2 February. That means that the Official Gazette will no doubt be back dated and this is unacceptable. We should operate within the law as lawmakers in this House. Thank you. *[Applause]*

**The Acting Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs

**Hon Clemenet J Rohee:** Mde Speaker, I wish to assure the Members on the other side of the House that it was never the intention of this Government or us on this House to engage in the type of Parliamentary practice. Mde Speaker, I would not wish to make this issue a controversy in this Parliament, but I would, however, wish to express our appreciation to the acceptance of the good-faith measure of us on this side of the House for the acceptance in principle. Thank you very much.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion carried**

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

### **Presentation and First Reading**

**INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 2007 - Bill No. 10/2007 published on 2007-02-02**

By the *Minister of Finance*

**Hon Ashini K Singh:** In presenting this Bill I wish to clarify that the Bill as a matter of fact was submitted as required together with the Budget documents on 2 February 2007. I hasten to add, of course, our tremendous appreciation of the expressions of support for the provisions of the Bill as articulated by the Honourable Member Mr Winston Murray and the Honourable Member Mrs Sheila Holder. I would like to add my voice to that of the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs by saying that I do not wish any controversy to be associated with this Bill.

Mde Speaker, with those brief words of introduction, I moved that this Bill be read the first time. *[Pause]*

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The Hon Minister of Home Affairs ... re: Suspension Of Standing Order Nos. 28(1) and 54

**Hon Clement J Rohee:**

*BE IT RESOLVED*

*That Standing order No. 54 be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed at its sitting on Tuesday, 20 February 2007, with the Second reading and the remaining stages of the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2007 - Bill No.10 of 2007.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs, you have another Standing Order to suspend.

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mde Speaker, I wish to move that Standing Order No. 54 be suspended to enable the National Assembly to proceed with the Second and Third readings of the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill - Bill No. 10/2007.

**The Acting Speaker:** First of all, the Bill should have been read a First time.

Honourable Minister, it should have been Standing Orders Nos. 28(1) and 54.

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Yes, Mde Speaker, my apologies.

Mde Speaker, with your leave I would like to ask that Standing Order Nos. 28(1) and 54 be suspended in order to enable the National Assembly to proceed at this Sitting with the Second reading and the remaining stages of the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2007 - Bill No. 10/2007.

**Question proposed, put and agreed to.**

**Motion carried.**

**The Acting Speaker:** Honourable Members, the Bill will now be read the first time.

**Bill read the First Time.**

## **PUBLIC BUSINESS**

### **(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

## **MOTION**

**NA – BUDGET ESTIMATES - 20 FEBRUARY 2007**  
**BUDGET SPEECH - MOTION FOR THE**  
**APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF**  
**EXPENDITURE FOR 2007**

Honourable Members, we will now move to the Business of the day. We will go to the consideration of the Estimates.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Speaker, on a point of order - is it in order to move to the next item on Order Paper when from all appearances, we have not completed the Bill through all its stages, because I am waiting for the Second Reading for the debate stage so I can say my few words?

**The Acting Speaker:** Honourable Member Mr Murray, we are following the order of the Order Paper and it says here that the Government in fact arranges the Government's business how it is ordered on the Paper and the Second and Third readings falls within the ambit of the Government's business. Having introduced and read the Bill a First time and read it, we move to the Government's business, when the appropriate time has come, we will read the Bill for a second time

**Mr Winston S Murray:** My apology. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker:** So we will move to the Business which is the continuation of the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure.

The Assembly will resume consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 2007

## **IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

Honourable Members, could you turn to Volume 1 of the Estimates? The First Ministry we will look at is the Ministry of Finance.

Pages 40 and 41 ...

### **AGENCY 03 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE, Programme 031 - Ministry Administration**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$9,413,159,000 for Agency 031 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 031 - Ministry Administration - stands part of the Estimates

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Murray

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6116 - Contracted Employees - Could the Honourable Minister of Finance identify the list of contracted employees and their categorisation, if possible

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similar to the categorisation for the traditional Public Service together with the positions that these contracted employees occupy and the emoluments that are paid to these contracted employees.

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, as indicated in the Estimates there are eighteen employees under this category. They are as follows:

- The Finance Secretary;
- The Deputy Finance Secretary;
- Four Confidential Secretaries;
- Eleven Drivers; and
- One Economic and Financial Analyst.

The emoluments are as follows:

Finance Secretary \$548,850 per month;

- Deputy Finance Secretary \$343,032 per month;
- The Confidential Secretaries' salaries vary between \$42,000 and \$47,250 per month;
- The Drivers are paid \$49,546 per month; and

The Economic and Financial Economist is paid \$99,499 per month.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Murray

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, is the Honourable Minister aware that for all those positions he identified that there are similar categories in the Public Service which salary scales that are substantially lower than those he has just read out and could he say what are the circumstances that warrant such a differential payment for similar categories of employees?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashini K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, I would say that in relation to the positions with respect to contracted employees, it has been said before that the option of contracting these employees is pursued as a means of broadening the skills based and the pools of skills within the Ministry and as a result the mechanism of contracting these employees at the stated salaries was utilised.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister say whether a Confidential Secretary in the Public Service has similar qualifications as a Confidential Secretary on a contracted employment basis, what could be her moral justification for paying the Public Service employee a lower salary than a contracted employee?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, these Confidential Secretaries are confidential secretaries to the Minister and the arrangement of contracting confidential secretaries to the Minister's Secretariat is not an unusual one.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, is the Minister aware that in the traditional Public Service, for what it is worth, I once was a Minister, it has been the tradition to identify persons from within the Public Service to perform as confidential secretaries and could the Minister say what is the reason for that not continuing to be the case?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, I am not sure that I could add much to this issue. To be honest, it has been ventilated extensively during the course of this Budget Debate and I am not sure that there is much that I could add to this issue.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Khemraj Ramjattan

**Mr Khemraj Ramjattan:** Mde Chairperson, I wish the Minister could answer the question as regards this differential; is this Government not promoting inequality as a result?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** No, Mde Chairperson.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** A follow-up question - but would the Minister not acknowledge that as a matter of fact there is a differential and there is therefore unequal pay?

**Hon Dr Ashni Singh:** Not necessarily, Mde Chairperson, there is a number of other variables involved including differential in qualifications of the persons filling these positions.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Judith David-Blair

**Mrs Judith David-Blair:** Mde Chairperson, my question to the Minister is: what are the qualifications for a driver?

**The Chairperson:** What is the Account Code?

**Mrs Judith David-Blair:** The same Account Code.

**The Chairperson:** What is the same? You have to call it Mrs David-Blair.

**Mrs Judith David-Blair:** Account Code 6116, Mde Chairperson - what are the qualifications required for a contractor?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, I would not have that information in my possession at this point in time, but I suspect it is a rhetorical question.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Murray

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6141 - Revision of Wages and Salaries - Would the Minister agree that the sum of \$1,847,926,000 identified as the sum for revision of wages and salaries in 2007 is approximately five percent of the total wages and salaries bill for 2007 and if he so agrees, would he also agree that

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this sum identifies a level of increase in salary for 2007 for public servants to the order of five percent?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, my apologies, can I ask the Honourable Member to repeat his question please? I am terribly sorry about this.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, does the Minister agree that the sum earmarked for the revision of wages and salaries in 2007 is approximately five percent of the total wages and salaries bill identified for 2007 and therefore does the Minister agree that the sum earmarked for the revision of wages and salaries in 2007 is of the order of five percent increase for public service employees in 2007?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, not necessarily and I say not necessarily because the allocation for revision of wages and salaries is not solely used for salary increase. It is also used for payment of employment cost shortfalls in other agencies that might be occasioned for example by new appointments or promotions that might occur during the course of the year, which would be met out of this allocation.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, if that explanation were to hold, then would the Minister agree that the balance out of this \$1,847,926,000 would result in an increase of revision of wages and salaries for public servants of less than five percent?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Not necessarily again, Mde Chairperson, because it must be borne in mind that the agreed increase for teachers is already known and to the extent that we were able to incorporate that increase, we have sought to estimate the impact of that increase and include it in the Ministry of Education's Budget and the Regional Education Programme budgets also. So it is not a simple issue of a one-to-one mapping, because the increase for teachers to the extent (remember these are estimates) possible we have sought to incorporate into the relevant programmes which is know already for teachers.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, with great respect to the Honourable Minister, is he aware that it has always been the case that teachers' negotiations are separate and apart from and are not normally reflected in revision of wages and salaries, and the revision of wages and salaries identified here under the Ministry of Finance given his own explanation therefore could only relate to increases for other public service employees other than teachers, because on this own explanation, the amount for the increases for teachers is shown in the Ministry of Education. Therefore these sums of money here are in fact for the other public servants and that this amounts to less than five percent.

Further, would the Minister not agree that if there is to be any further reductions of this for whatever reason for paying others elsewhere that the resultant effect would be a smaller than five percent increase for the traditional public servant in 2007.

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, once again I do not agree and by way of clarification I would say that it is not my recollection that the provision for salary increases for teachers is reflected elsewhere other than the revision of wages and salaries. On previous occasions such as last year when the increase was awarded for teachers was not known at the time when the Budget came to Parliament, the provision for teachers would have been included in this allocation in the Budget Estimates. I am simply saying that on this occasion, because the salary increase for teachers is known based on the agreement that has been reached with the union, we have attempted as best as we possible could to include that increase in the other allocations. For that reason a comparison between this revision of wages and salaries with the entire public sector wage bill, I am taking one as a percentage of the other ...

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister say after all those explanations about what monies reside where, what is the sum of money out of this that is earmarked for increases to the traditional public service in the year 2007?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, the increase to public servants would be the result of a negotiated process.

**The Chairperson:** Honourable Members, I will ...  
*[Interruption]*

**Mr Winston S Murray:** No, no, no, Madame! So Mde Chairperson, after all that the Minister has said, would it be reasonable to conclude that the sum of money put here for the revision of wages and salaries is an uncertain sum?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, I would describe it as an estimated sum.

**The Chairperson:** I will now put the question ...  
*[Interruption]*

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Is it for both pages, Madame?

**The Chairperson:** No, we are going one page at a time.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Okay!

**The Chairperson:** I will now put the question that the sums stated under Programme 031 ... *[Interruption]*

**Mr Winston S Murray:** No, Mde Chairperson. Then you are putting both pages because both pages deal with Programme 031?

**The Chairperson:** We are doing Pages 40 and 41, across the spread, Mr Murray.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Yes, that is why I asked whether it was both pages, because I have a question on Page 41.

**The Chairperson:** We will treat with Pages 40 and 41 and then 42 and 43, because it is a spread.

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**Mr Winston S Murray:** Okay Madame! Account Code 6311 - Rates and Taxes - Could the Honourable Minister say whether the rates and taxes figure of \$335,426,000 represents the total sum of all monies due and payable for rates and taxes by the government?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, it does.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, if that is so, could the Honourable Minister say how much of this sum is rates and taxes that will be paid to the Georgetown Municipal City Council?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, I cannot provide the exact figure, but I will say that the overwhelming majority of this amount will be paid to the Georgetown City Council.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister confirm that being paid to the City Council does not mean through an intermediary, but direct payment to the City Council for it to use as it sees fit?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, the amounts would be paid to the City Council.

**Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 031 - Ministry of Finance - \$9,413,159,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 42 and 43

**AGENCY 03 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE,  
Programme 032 - Government Accounting  
Administration**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$3,527,097 for Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 032 - Government Accounting Administration - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mr Murray

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6013 - Statutory Pensions and Gratuities - could the Honourable Minister confirm that the sum earmarked for Statutory Pensions and Gratuities has an increase in it for pensioners and gratuities receivers?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** I can confirm, Mde Chairperson.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** You *can* or *can't*?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** I *can*.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** If the Minister can, could the Minister ... because *can* is what I understand ...

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** *Can* is correct.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** ... and if it is that the Minister can, could the Minister say what percentage of increase is contemplated in this figure?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, as with wages and salaries, the ultimate determination of the amount or the quantum of the increase will be the result of a process. What I will say the amount will be finally paid to pensioners will be met out of this line and out of other appropriate lines such as 6342 - Pension Increases.

**Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 032 - Government Accounting Administration - \$3,527,097 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 393 and 394 ...

**AGENCY 03 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE, Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$9,372,483,000 for Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - stands part of the Estimates.

**The Chairperson:** We will take both pages.

The Honourable Member Mr Murray

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 1301400 - Support to community drainage and irrigation projects - Would the Minister agree that the referenced capital project page showing the details of this \$834,369,000 does not give any details about which drains and culverts, but only a catch-all? Does he agree that that is the case and if he agrees that that is the case does he not further agree that in the interest of transparency that the project document intending to show an account for expenditure of over \$800,000,000 should contain some degree of details so that Parliamentarians as the people's representative could be aware of exactly how this money is to be spent ... [*Interruption: 'What is the Question?'*] That is the question. If you listen to it, it is a question.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, I would not necessarily agree.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Well Mde Chairperson, would the Minister agree that no specific areas have been identified in the project for the expenditure of \$800,000,000, because none exists in this project profile? Would he agree?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, I would say that the Project Profile has a box - Box 3, which indicates the regions that would benefit from this project and Box 3

identifies Regions 1 to 10 and describes this project as a national project.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, could the Minister kindly do this House the favour of letting the people's representatives know on what specific projects in each region this sum of \$800,000,000 is intended to be spent?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, I most certainly could endeavour to answer that question by saying that the sums allocated would be used to clean and rehabilitate community drains, culverts and parapets in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4 and Georgetown in particular, 5, 6 and 10.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Leader of the Opposition

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** A supplementary question, Madame, on the same head - Would the Minister say that this is the same source of the funding for those persons who allegedly are paid monthly in the various communities and who are handpicked many times by political functionaries under this co-called community drainage and irrigation projects in the various regions?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, I am not sure about the reference being made by the Honourable Leader

of the Opposition, but what I will say that this is the project that does the community drainage and irrigation works. I will also say that a particular process is followed in order to identify the persons to be employed and in order to monitor the works done.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Sheila Holder

**Mrs Sheila VA Holder:** Mde Chairperson, as a supplementary question, I would like to ask the Honourable Minister whether or not he is comfortable with the comments of the Leader of the Opposition and if not, will he seek to defray them by providing the information as to whether or not it is accurate.

**The Chairperson:** Honourable Leader of the Opposition

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** Mde Chairperson, would the Honourable Minister then identify the criteria since is unaware of the slush fund and the fact that these people are picked by political functionaries, the procedures that are followed in the employment and management of these so-called D and I projects in the communities that will use \$800,000,000?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, in terms of recruiting of the staff, vacancies were advertised in all of the national newspapers, applications were sent to the RDCs, NDCs and the Ministry of Finance - an excess of 4,700 applications were received; shortlists were

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developed by the RDCs, NDCs, CDCs and the Ministry of Finance; preference was given to unemployed youths and unemployed single parents. A shortlist was finalised with local community groups RDCs, NDCs and the Ministry of Finance and in the case of Georgetown, the Mayor and City Council was actively involved.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Winston Murray

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister say ... *[Interruption]*

**The Chairperson:** On the same line item, Mr Murray!

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Yes Madame! Could the Honourable Minister say after all the recommendations and analyses have been done by these various agencies, who specifically approves of these projects?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, like I say, the final selection of the persons employed is made by a process that involves all of these players, the NDCs, the RDCs and the Ministry of Finance.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Winston Murray

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Project Code 1900400 - Basic Needs Trust Fund-5, where a sum of \$690,000,000 is going to be spent. Would the Minister not agree that

when you look at the Project 18 for this sum of money of \$690,000,000 that the description of the project is much more in keeping with the principle of transparency in that it identifies specifically which schools are to be done, which health facilities are to be done and could the Minister say whether he agrees that this is a proper way in which a project profile should be built.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, I believe that my answer was pre-empted, but for the sake of the records, I would not necessarily agree with the Honourable Member.

**The Chairperson:** Honourable Members, I will now put the question.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** No, Madame! Please allow me enough time to rise from my seat; I would plea.

Project Code 4400700 - Poverty Programme - This refers to Project 23 and my question to the Minister is whether he agrees that this is another project with one hundred percent vagueness since it simply says special support to most vulnerable groups in the country and to community development groups. Does the Minister really think that this a sound and transparent enough basis to get this National Assembly to approve \$505,128,000 for expenditure?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, I would say that the description provides or rather the Project Profile provides a description that captures as best as it could the broad nature of the project.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Murray

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, would the Minister therefore agree that once there is no specificity here, this Parliament have no way of knowing post this Budget exactly what is given to whom, where and how until the Auditor General comes some years after to audit this process?

**The Chairperson:** Mde Chairperson, once again I do not agree and I would say that the issue of accountability is served at several stages including like the Honourable Member quite rightly said that these items of expenditures are all audited and this House does get apprised of a complete detail of how this expenditure was incurred and on what, et cetera.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, would the Minister agree as in the case of the details in the Estimates for Current Revenue and Expenditure that it would be much more transparent and much more informative to the people's representatives for them to know in advance how it is that the money is contemplated to be spent so that they are afforded an opportunity before it is spent to have an input into how and where the money should be spent?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, once again I am not exactly sure how much more I can add to what has been said already on this issue. I believe I have addressed the issue exhaustively and I do think that we can continue on this.

**The Chairperson:** Honourable Leader of the Opposition

**Hon Robert HO Corbin:** Mde Chairperson, I am not trying to be meticulous, this is a very serious matter which relates to large sums of money being approved by this House.

**The Chairperson:** What Project Code?

**Hon Robert HO Corbin:** The same Project Code 44007700 - Poverty Programme - I would assume and would the Minister inform this House whether this poverty programme and the funding, which has been allocated relates to any document in the possession of the Ministry of Finance, which enable them to arrive at the amount allocated here. If so, would he enlighten us unto the various heads of this poverty programme that we are approving? [*Interruption: 'You said that the whole country is in poverty.'*] Yes, that is why I want to know where it is going. Where is it going?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, we are guided on this matter among other things by precedent

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and in the case of the poverty programme, the areas that these resources are used are well known, they include a number of poverty alleviating areas:

- Agriculture;
- Amerindian Assistance;
- Disaster Relief;
- Education;
- Health;
- Housing;
- Infrastructure Safety Net;
- Security;
- Water;
- Youth and Sport et cetera.

It is a demand-driven programme in arriving at the estimates to be recommended to this House and also in determining the areas for consideration for financing; like I said, we are guided by abundant precedent.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon Robert HO Corbin:** Mde Chairperson, a supplementary question on the same head, would the Minister indicate to this Parliament whether there is some

document in the Ministry of Finance that can be made available to this Parliament before we adjourn this Debate with the various heads and the methodology to be used in the allocation of these resources?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** I would say, there does not exist a formal document that I would necessarily make ... *[Interruption: 'Available!']* No, no, no, there does not necessarily exist a formal document, but what I would say is that there exist in the Ministry of Finance an abundance of documented experiences in this matter that guide with respect to the process. There exist within the Ministry of Finance an abundance of internal documentation that guides us in the process of receiving and evaluating applications for assistance under this line.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Murray

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, would the Honourable Minister be prepared in the interest of transparency to bring the projects that he intends to approve or through the consultative process to approve to the National Assembly prior to expending money of them if only for the information of the National Assembly.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, as I mentioned before this is a demand driven initiative and I would say that information on the projects are provided through the vehicle of the Auditor General's Report.

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Mde Chairperson, would the Minister not agree that as in the case of the general Budget Estimates Current Expenditure and Revenue that Parliament should have an opportunity to have an input before these projects are in fact executed? That is the principle; is it not Mr Minister, behind these whole set of estimates of revenue and expenditure. Would the Minister not agree that the Auditor General's Report does not provide such an opportunity? That is a post fact report; it only tells us whether the monies have been spent in accordance with proper procedures and systems. So would the Minister agree that in order to meet the prior requirement of transparency, of being made aware and having an input that it is more appropriate for the Parliament to have knowledge of the proposed expenditure before it actually takes place?

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, I believe that requirement is satisfied by virtue of these Estimates coming before the National Assembly.

**The Chairperson:** Honourable Members, I will now put the question which is ... [*Interruption*]

**Mr Winston S Murray:** No Mde Chairperson, this is my right and this is what I am here for. Mde Chairperson, I know the Government is unhappy about exercising of rights and privileges in this Assembly, I intend to exercise mine as the people's representatives especially when there is such opaqueness in the Estimates.

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Project Code 4501100 - Youth Initiative Programme - the Profile for this programme is No. 30. Could the Honourable Minister say who approves the expenditures under this Youth Initiative Programmes?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, the projects to be financed under the Youth Initiative Programme were identified out of consultations with youths out of a Youth Conference held in 2001 and like I said represents projects that were identified as necessary coming out of that process.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Murray

**Mr Winston S Murray:** Perhaps I did not speak loud enough or clear enough. The question which I ask the Honourable Minister which is his right not to respond to, could the Honourable Minister say who and in which agency approves of the specific projects to be financed out of this \$15,000,000?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Murray

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Chairperson, once again these projects are already identified.

**Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - \$9,392,483,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 180 and 181

**AGENCY 48 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, HUMAN SERVICES AND SOCIAL SECURITY, Programme 481 -Ministry Administration**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$108,385,000 for Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Programme 481 - Ministry Administration - stands part of the Estimates.

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6116 - Contracted Employees - Could the Honourable Minister indicate to this House the Portfolios of these contracted employees?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Labour.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Mde Chairperson, Permanent Secretary, Legal Officer, Senior Superintendent of Buildings, Administrative Assistants (3), Confidential Secretary, Technical Officer, Drivers, Co-ordinator TIP and the National Co-ordinator on the Rights of the Child.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Danny

**Mr Dave Danny:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6255 - Maintenance and Other Infrastructure - there is an exorbitant sum here of \$1,450,000 against \$191,000 for last year, can the Minister explain the reason for this.

**The Chairperson:** What line Item Honourable Member?

**Mr Dave Danny:** Account Code 6255, it is at the bottom of Page 180.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Labour

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** It is exorbitant against what we spent last year, however, we need to do repairs to trestles at the locations, car parks, security fence, security huts; there is a number of small infrastructure works to do and we have locations from Essequibo to Berbice and in Georgetown.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Basil Williams

**Mr Basil Williams:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6302 - Training (Including Scholarships) - the sum of \$400,000, could then the Minister say who he is training and in what areas this training is directed to?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of labour

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** The \$400,000 here is for staff development training and in addition to what is done through the Public Service Management; we also send staff at different levels to refresher courses during the year.

**Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Programme - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 182 and 183 ...

**AGENCY 48 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, HUMAN SERVICES AND SOCIAL SECURITY, Programme 482 - Social Services**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$2,287,832,000 for Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Programme 482 - Social Services

- stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Mrs Lawrence

**Mrs Vold A Lawrence:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6113 -Other Technical and Craft Skilled - could the Honourable Minister say whether Social Workers are captured under this head and if so , how many social workers are captured?

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** Mde Chairperson, I am happy to report that Social Services Workers are captured under this head.

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** How many?

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** What is the other part of the question?

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Mde Chairperson, the other part of my question is how many Social Workers?

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** Thirty-one.

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Could the Honourable Minister say whether that is the full strength?

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** Thirty-one is presently what we have. We intend to hire more to carry out effectively the functions that we have to carry out.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Lawrence

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6116 - Contracted Employees - could the Minister say in which capacities are these contracted workers employed and what are their portfolios and what will be the portfolio of the additional staff?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Human Services and Social Security

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** Contracted Employees:

- Director of Social Services;
- Ward Sisters;

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- Officers in the Women's Affairs Bureau (3);
- Administrator of the Night Shelter;
- Assistant Chief Probation and Social Services Officer;
- Probation and Social Services Officer (2);
- Information Resources Manager;
- Administrator of the Documentation Centre;
- Co-ordinator of the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute;
- Administrative Assistant, GWLI;
- System Analyst;
- Database Administrator;
- Data Processing Operator;
- Confidential Secretary (2);
- Project Officer;
- Documentation Assistant;
- Pension Clerks (3);
- Statistical Officers (5);
- Drivers (6);

- Farmhand; and
- Accounts Clerk.

**Mrs Vold A Lawrence:** A supplementary question - could the Minister indicate how many of these contracted persons work in the Difficult Circumstances Unit?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Human Services and Social Security

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** Under this Programme, one.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Lawrence

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6224 - Print and Non-Print Materials - could the Minister explain whether this amount includes expenses for the printing of school uniform vouchers and if yes, could the Minister say how many vouchers were printed in 2006 and how many are on programme to be printed in 2007.

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** It does not include the printing of the uniform vouchers, so I believe the other two questions would be irrelevant under this line item.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Basil Williams

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**Mr Basil Williams:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - could the Honourable Minister say whether the Guyana Trades Union Congress is included under this head in these organisations?

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** Well, it is clearly spelt out on Pages 380 and 381 what organisations are in receipt of subsidies. What was the name of the organisation?

**Mr Basil Williams:** Is the Guyana Trades Union Congress there?

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** It is as absent as every other trade union.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Volda Lawrence

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - could the Honourable Minister indicate whether the shelter, Chester Home and the Palms are included in this amount allocated?

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** The Night Shelter included and the Office at New Amsterdam, the Head Office as well as a house to house officers at Whim.

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Could the Honourable Minister indicate what percentage of this amount will go towards the shelter?

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** The last estimate we checked, we needed about \$1,000,000 to do just very necessary repairs at the night shelter.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - When we look at Page 380, we see that Help and Shelter received \$1,000,000 in view of all that Help and Shelter is proposed to do and as they say the amount of publicity it has received recently, is the Minister satisfied that that \$1,000,000 can cause it to do what is absolutely necessary.

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** Help and Shelter is just being subsidised by the Government and Yes, I am satisfied that this and other collaborative efforts will enable the shelter to do what it is mandated to do.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** A supplementary question: is the Minister in a position in a position to share with this Honourable House what percentage of the total income of Help and Shelter this \$1,000,000 represents.

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** I do not believe it is an income earning organisation. It is an NGO and I believe that question would perhaps be better posted to Help and Shelter. I am not aware of Help and Shelter's financial statement.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** No, I was not asking that. It is a charity and people donate and you say that your

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\$1,000,000 is just one donation that they receive. My question to you is, are you aware of what percentage your \$1,000,000 represents in the total basket of donations they would receive in a year. That is the question.

**The Chairperson:** Mrs Backer, I do not think that that is a question for the Minister. She gives a subsidy to the entity as an NGO and I do not think that is a fair question really.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** I would be guided, Madame.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Lawrence

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Made Chairperson, Account Code 6283 - Cleaning and Extermination Services - could the Honourable Minister indicate whether this amount includes for the Palms and the Shelter and whether this amount is adequate for the year.

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** Cleaning and Extermination Services - Yes, it includes the Palms, the Shelter, the Drop-in Centre, the Mahaica Children's home and the Mahaica Children's Hospital, and it is supplemented under Account Code 6284.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Ms Jennifer Wade

**Ms Jennifer Wade:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6284 - Other - Can the Honourable Minister say what is meant by *Other*?

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** This Account Code caters for payment for the post office which is the agency that pensioners can redeem their vouchers at. It also caters for funeral expenses for the residents of the Palms, cutting hair expenses and other expenses that are associated with the operating costs at the Palms, the Mahaica Children's Home, the Drop-in Centre and the Night Shelter. We cater for people's clothes and other facilities that they may need such as medical, et cetera.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Lawrence

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6292 - Dietary - could the Honourable Minister explain the decrease given that the Night Shelter now a shelter and that shelter also for street children are expected to capture more persons and operate continuously on a twenty-four hour basis?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Human Services and Social Security

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** I have noted myself the decrease and we are going to try very hard to ensure that this is adequate, if not we will be approaching this Honourable House again.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Volda Lawrence

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6302 - Training (Including Scholarships) - through

you it is noted that this is an extraordinary increase from zero to \$11,675,000, could the Honourable Minister tell this House of the extraordinary training and scholarships which will be offered?

**The Chairperson:** Honourable Minister

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** It is not extraordinary. GWLI which is the Guyana Women Leadership Institute was prior to very recent a subvention agency and to the training that they offered which benefited many Guyanese would not have been reflected here. Now they are subsumed under the Ministry and that is why you see this \$11,675,000 there, because that is going to take care of the training that we will administer this year.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Lawrence

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6343 - Old Age Pensions and Social Assistance - could the Honourable Minister say whether this allocation takes in account the number of persons on the old age pension register and also for the estimated addition?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** It does.

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** A supplementary question, Mde Chairperson - How many additional persons are catered for here?

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**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** Phenomenal with old age pensioners; some die so they drop off the list and others are added on to the list. Most of the time, we have an average of about 33,000 persons. The amount also caters for the persons to whom we offered public assistance, that is, in excess of 16,000.

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** My last question, Mde Chairperson. Account Code 6294 - Other - could the Honourable Minister say what percentage of this amount is allocated to the Difficult Circumstances Unit?

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** None.

**Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Programme 482 - Social Services - \$2,287,832,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 184 and 185

**AGENCY 48 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, HUMAN SERVICES AND SOCIAL SECURITY, Programme 483 - Labour Administration**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$112,732,000 for Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and

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Social Security, Programme 483 - Labour Administration  
- stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Mr Basil Williams

**Mr Basil Williams:** Mde Chairperson, if we could compress Account Codes 6111 to 6117 - Total Wages and Salary - out of a total workforce of seventy-nine, could the Honourable Minister explain why the seventeen contracted employees get \$33,000,000 out of the total wages bill of \$58,000,000, which the balance goes to sixty-three workers from the traditional public service? Could the Honourable Minister explain; seventeen contracted workers out of a work force of seventy-nine get the greater share of a total wages bill of \$58,000,000 whereas the sixty-three traditional public servants get a lesser sum of \$24,000,000?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Labour

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Mde Chairperson, yes, these are skills that were not available and we had to remunerate so as to acquire these skills.

**Mr Dave Danny:** Mde Chairperson, can the Minister say what criteria was used to come to the conclusion.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Not readily available.

**The Chairperson:** What Account Code are you quoting, Honourable Member?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** The same one he is asking the supplementary on.

**Mr Basil Williams:** Mde Chairperson ... *[Interruption]*

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** ... The officer, Presidential Adviser; Senior Community Development Officer; Confidential Secretaries to these persons also do come under contract; Drivers, Directors (Training); Personal Assistant to the Minister and so forth.

**Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Programme 483 - Labour Administration - \$112,732,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates**

**The Chairperson:** Page 421 ...

**AGENCY 48 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, HUMAN SERVICES AND SOCIAL SECURITY, Capital Expenditure -Agency Totals**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$962,005,000 for Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Service and Social Security, Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mrs Volda Lawrence

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 1206800 - Buildings - could the Honourable Minister say what percentage would go towards the Palms and does the works include the demolition of the un-occupied building in the compound?

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** The approximate figure would be about eighty percent to the Palms.

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Would she demolish the building - the second part of the question?

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** I am sorry; I did not hear the other part of the question.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Lawrence

**Mrs Vold A Lawrence:** Mde Minister, I asked whether the un-occupied building in the compound - that eyesore - would be demolished in this expenditure.

**Hon Priya D Manickchand:** We have not taken any decision to abolish as yet.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Lawrence

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 1901800 - SIMAP - PHASE III - Where are the multi-purpose centres going to be which will benefit these persons?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Human Services and Social Security

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Mde Chairperson, I did not hear the heading under which she asked the question.

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Project Code 1901800, could the Honourable Minister indicate the allocation for the multi-purpose centres?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Is that under community development?

**Mr James K McAllister:** It will have to be. Look at SIMAP.

**The Chairperson:** We are looking at Page 421; what is the project code?

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** 1901800.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Which heading?

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Community Development - \$282,474,000.

**The Chairperson:** It is under SIMAP- PHASE III.

**Mrs Volda A Lawrence:** Yes, the third one.

**The Chairperson:** Okay, I see it there.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Mde Chairperson, these are spread throughout the country; Region 1 has eleven

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projects; Region 2 has five; Region 3 has three; Region 4 has three, Region 5 has one; Region 6 has one; Region 7 has six; Region 8 has one; Region 9 has three; Region 10 has seven. Most of these are now being completed, because SIMAP comes to an end in four months and these are allocations just to complete these programmes. No new project will commence under this head; this is to complete these projects that are spread throughout the length and breadth of our country.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr James McAllister

**Mr James K McAllister:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 1901800 - Roads - would the Honourable Minister say if the same thing is applicable to roads; no new projects introduced this year?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Yes.

**Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - \$962,005,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 206 and 207

**AGENCY 52 - MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS,  
Programme 521 - Main Office**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$11,662,000 for Agency 52 - Ministry of Legal Affairs, Programme 521 - Main Office - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6116 - Contracted Employees - the Staffing Details tells us that there is one person who is a contract employee earning the sum of \$6,693,000 per annum and my question to the Honourable Minister is; if he can kindly share with this Honourable House the designation of that contracted employee?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** Mde Chairperson, the Principal Legal Draftsman, Mr Dhurjon and the Permanent Secretary and one Driver.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, I am just seeking clarification, we see a total Staffing Details of one person and it is a contracted person, but the Honourable Attorney General seems to be suggesting by the answer that in fact there are three people employed in the Main Office, but the details of the current expenditure very clearly says one person.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** I am advised that the contracted employee - one, is the Permanent Secretary. The other contracted employees are in the drafting department and one driver.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Madame, just for my records, I am looking at Pages 206 and 207; it says to me very clearly under Staffing Details - COA 6116 - Contracted Employees 1. In fact, the total staff is one and if it is the Permanent Secretary I would immediately apply for the job, but I know that I would not get it, but I would apply, but my very serious question is the designation of the contracted employee (1), who has been paid the princely sum of \$6,693,000 per annum. I need the designation; I do not want the name.

**The Chairperson:** The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** Mde Chairperson, the designation under COA 6116 - Contracted Employee 1 - That is the Permanent Secretary and the salary is \$381,000 per month. The other salary of Mr Dhurjon is there.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Leader of the Opposition

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** Mde Chairperson, without attempting to disrupt your ruling, I just want to clarify

that my colleague was mentioning that in your ruling you had said that we would not adjourn at 4.30 pm.

**The Chairperson:** We have taken a decision that the House will go until 5.00 pm. We will take the suspension at 5.00 pm instead of 4.00 as we do in the past.

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** So that at 5.30 pm the Motion will be taken.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, at 5.30 pm that is when we will resume from the break.

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** Thank you, Madame.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, the last thing I want to do is to nit-pick particularly with the learned Attorney General, but I just want to know; is the Honourable Attorney General saying that as we are on Page 206 which deals with one contracted employee, is that person the Permanent Secretary or is it the Principal Legal Adviser.

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** No, that is the Permanent Secretary.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Well then Sir, if it is the Permanent Secretary at \$360,000 per month per month it cannot reach \$6,693,000 per year, it would be less than that. So something is wrong.

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** The figure includes salary, gratuity, travelling allowance and duty allowance and those kinds of things.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Okay. I move now to Account Code 6271 - Telephone Charges - we see \$389,000 per annum and my respectful question is, does this reflect telephone charges at the office or at the home of the Permanent Secretary?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** It involves telephone charges together with the provision of internet facilities.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** My question was, does it reflect the charges at the office?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** It is at the office as well as the home.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Account Code 6281 -Security Services - firstly, which security service and secondly, is this security service confines to the office or is it the home of the person or both.

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** It is the home of the Attorney General.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, is the Honourable Attorney General saying at Account Code

6281 on Page 207 - Main Office - that deals with the security service at his home?

That does not make sense.

**The Chairperson:** That is what he is saying.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** I am just seeking clarification. Then could I respectfully ask, Account Code 6293 - Refreshment and Meals - \$274,000 was spent last year and we have budgeted this year for \$275,000 and my question is, what were these refreshment and meals used for? Meetings or is all this food consumed by one person?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** Regrettably it is not for the Attorney General, because I have never been able to take advantage of it, but I understand it is for meetings.

**Agency 52 - Ministry of Legal Affairs, Programme 521 - Main Office - \$11,662,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 208 and 209

**AGENCY 52 - MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS,  
Programme 522 - Ministry Administration**

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Question is proposed that the sum of \$28,962,000 for Agency 52 - Ministry of Legal Affairs, Programme 522 - Ministry Administration - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Account Code 6281 - Security Services - could the Honourable Minister indicate which Security Service is employed and which building or buildings are serviced by this security service?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** That is for the Ministry and I understand the service is provided for by the Police.

**Agency 52 - Ministry of Legal Affairs, Programme 522 - Ministry Administration - \$28,962,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 210 and 211

**AGENCY 52 - MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS,  
Programme 523 - Attorney General's Chambers**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$56,340,000 for Agency 52 - Ministry of Legal Affairs, Programme 523 - Attorney General's Chambers - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6116 - Contracted Employees - One contracted employee earning \$13,972,000 per annum, could the Honourable Minister be kind enough to share with us what is the designation?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** It is the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, salary, gratuity, vacation allowance, travelling, duty allowance, entertainment allowance.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Account Code 6133 - Benefits and Allowances - \$3,092,000 - is the Honourable Attorney General saying that that figure excludes the contracted employee?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** I am advised that it does exclude the contracted employee.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Account Code 6281 - Security Services - we see a figure of \$1,920,000 and my question is, which guard service and where are they guarding, because we have already been told that the building is being guarded by the Police Constabulary which is provided for in the previous page.

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** I understand it is the Special Constabulary and it is the home of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel.

**Agency 52 - Ministry of Legal Affairs, Programme 523 - Attorney General's Chambers - \$56,340,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 212 and 213

**AGENCY 52 - MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, Programme 524 - Office of the State Solicitor**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$8,063,000 for Agency 52 - Ministry of Legal Affairs, Programme 524 - Office of the State Solicitor - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** I am looking at the Staffing Details. We see Other Technical and Craft Skilled 1; Clerical and Office Support 8; Semi Skilled 1, that is a total of 10. My question to the learned Minister is where in these ten offices does the State Solicitor fit? Which one of these ten offices is occupied by the State Solicitor?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** Madame, I regret to say that this does not take account of the fact that the position of State Solicitor has been abolished and this is inaccurately reflected. It is the Official Receiver and Public Trustee as such, but the State Solicitor's position has been abolished.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** I am just seeking clarification; Honourable Minister are you then saying that the Heading - Office of the State Solicitor...

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** ... is in accurate

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** ... it should be reworded.

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** Yes.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** I hope that the authors of the Budget take note of that.

**Agency 52 - Ministry of Legal Affairs, Programme 524 - Office of the State Solicitor - \$8,063,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 214 and 215

**AGENCY 52 - MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, Programme 525 - Deeds Registry**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$38,110,000 for Agency 52 - Ministry of Legal Affairs, Programme 525 - Deeds Registry - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson Account Code 6281- Security Services - the name of the security service and which building are they guarding?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** One is the Special Constabulary and the other is RK Security Service. Two security officers are stationed.

**Agency 52 - Ministry of Legal Affairs, Programme 525 - Deeds Registry - \$38,110,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Page 424 ...

**AGENCY 52 - MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Agency Totals**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$ 161,500,000 for Agency 52 - Ministry of Legal Affairs - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - stands part of the Estimates

Mrs Deborah J Backer: No questions

**Agency 52 - Ministry of Legal Affairs - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - \$161,500,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson: Pages 222 and 223 ...**

**AGENCY 55 - SUPREME COURT, Programme 551 - Supreme Court of Judicature**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$380, 795,000 for Agency 55 - Supreme Court, Programme 551 - Supreme Court of Judicature - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6116 - Contracted Employees - the Staffing Details tells us that for this year five contracted employees; could the Honourable Minister be kind enough to tell us the designation of all five contracted employees?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** Regretfully, I will have to provide that answer in writing, because I am not familiar with whom those contracted employees are.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, I suspect that I may get the same answer for my next question, but I will still ask it.

Account Code 6131 - Other Direct Labour Cost - we see a figure of \$3,792,000 has been budgeted and my question to the Honourable Attorney General is who will benefit from this figure?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** I will give the same answer, but I will provide that answer, because the Supreme Court I do not want to say anything else, because I am not familiar with what all the expenditures are.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Account Code 6284 - Other - under subhead other goods and services purchased, we see a figure of \$26,500,000. In fact the budget for last year was \$26,500,000, the revised was the same and this year it is the same, which suggests that there is some certainty about this head. My question to the Honourable Minister what items are captured under that head of \$26,500,000?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** Madame, I will have to provide to the Assembly the answer in writing, because I am not familiar with what those expenses are.

**The Chairperson:** Honourable Attorney General, just as a matter of interest, shouldn't the Registrar of the Supreme Court be at your side at a time like this, when we are looking at the Estimates.

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** Madame, I do not want to make a comment.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, I am sorry to perhaps bore the House, but I will have to go through the few questions that I have nonetheless anticipating almost as I do so that I will be met with the same answer.

Account Code 6293 - Refreshment and Meals - a sum of \$6,200,000 again the same thing, it was budgeted for \$6.2 M in 2006, the revised is the same, this year we have come with the same and my question to the Honourable Minister, is this the subhead where meals for jurors are provided for?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** I would have thought that Mr Basil Williams would have been helpful in this respect. *[Laughter]* How many jury trials he has attended to, but as you correctly it may be provision for jurors' facilities.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** That is not good enough.

**Agency 55 - Supreme Court, Programme 551 - Supreme Court of Judicature - \$380,795,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 224 and 225 ...

**AGENCY 55 - SUPREME COURT, Programme 552 -  
Magistrates' Department**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$196,037,000 for Agency55 - Supreme Court, Programme 552 - Magistrates' Department - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Account Code 6116 - Contracted Employees - the Staffing Details tells us that we have reduced from seven contracted employees to five; they are earning a total of \$26,622,000 divided by five gives us a figure of about \$5,000,000 for each person per year. My question to the Honourable Minister is the designations of these five contracted employees in the Magistrates' Department.

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** Madame, my answer will have to be the same, because I am not familiar with the details, but I will certainly provide that information to the Assembly.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Account Code 6133 - Benefits and Allowances - we see a figure increased from \$9,684,000 to \$12,731,000 and my question to the Honourable Minister, am I correct in assuming that the out-of-town expenses for Magistrates as they go to the interior courts are covered under this head?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** I would assume so.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Account Codes 6111 to 6117 - Total Wages and Salaries - permission to take them as one for the purpose of this question, could the Honourable Minister say where in the Staffing Details are magistrates provided for an please do not rush and say craft skilled?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** Madame, as I said before the Supreme Courts and the Magistracy, I do not want to say that they are separate entities, because I am still responsible and answerable for them, but those answers will have to be provided for in writing. I could provide them early.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, seeing that the Honourable Attorney General has indicated that he is in a position to provide these things in writing, would the Honourable Minister be kind enough and this is why I am taking a great pain, I know, to Ms Teixeira and I suspect to other people - I am taking pains to go through it, could the Honourable Minister indicate to this House when he would be in such a position?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** I would think in two weeks.

**Agency 55 - Supreme Court, Programme 552 - Magistrates' Department - \$196,037,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Page 426 ...

**AGENCY 55 - SUPREME COURT - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Agency Totals**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$59,800,000 for Agency 55 - Supreme Court - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 1201400 - Buildings - the Legend tells us, completion the Court of Appeal, construction of magistrate court and renovation of judges' quarters. When we look at the Capital Project Profile at Page 202, we see that this is an ongoing project with \$49.662 million having been before 2007 and that the final \$50 million that has now been budgeted for, my question to the Honourable Minister is how much of the \$49.662 million was spent in 2006 on the Court of Appeal and what portion of the \$50 million will be used to complete it.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

*(see PART II of III Page 81)*

# National Assembly Debates

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20th Sitting

14:50h

Tuesday 20 February 2007

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## **PART II (cont'd from PART I of III)**

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** \$37,000,000 was utilised last year and now it is estimated that another \$4,000,000 will be utilised for the completion.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** A supplementary question - That then leaves \$46,000,000 from this year to go towards the construction of the Charity Magistrates Court ... Well before I ask that, let me seek a clarification ... The Legend speaks about renovation of the Judges' quarters, when you look at the profile on page 202, it speaks about construction of Charity Magistrate's Court and Judges Quarters at New Amsterdam. So my first question: is it a renovation or a construction, because the Legend tells you renovation, the Project page tells you construction? So that is the first clarification I need and then I will ask my other question.

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** I am advised that it is renovation at New Amsterdam.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Thank you. My supplementary question therefore is of the \$46,000,000 that would be left from this year after the \$4,000,000 is taken out to

complete the Court of Appeal, what portion of that \$46,000,000 will go to the construction of the Charity Magistrates' Court and what portion to the renovation of the Judges quarters at New Amsterdam? That sounds like fried rice.

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** I am advised that the estimate for the cost of the construction of the Magistrates' Court is in the vicinity of about \$20,000,000.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** So then it follows that \$26,000,000 is going to be used for the renovation of the Judges quarters in New Amsterdam. We should really have a spanking building then.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Members Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** There are only three items there. Project Code 2403900 - Land and Water Transport - The Legend tells us purchase of vehicle and my question to the Honourable Minister is what vehicle will be purchased and where will this vehicle be utilised. It is not a big sum, but I just want to know what type of vehicle where will it be utilised.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Attorney General and Minister pf Legal Affairs

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** I would believe that it might be for a vehicle, but as I say, I am not familiar with the actual details, but I will have to get that information. It has to be reconditioned.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** The last item - Project Code 2501400 - Furniture and equipment - the Legend tells us Purchase of furniture and equipment and the capital project profile at 204 list some things, computers, printers, stabilisers, et cetera; my question to the Honourable Minister is which Magistrates' Court will benefit from these equipment - stabilisers, printers, computers, photocopiers/

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** Fort Wellington will be the major beneficiary in respect to the Magistracy and some of the other Magistrates' Court.

**Agency 55 - Supreme Court - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - \$59,800,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 228 and 229 ...

**AGENCY 56 - PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS, Programme 561 - Public Prosecutions**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$62,688,000 for Agency 56 - Public Prosecutions, Programme 561 - Public Prosecutions - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** COA 6116 - Contracted Employees - we see that there are two contracted employees here out of a total staff of twenty-one and my respectful question to the Honourable Minister, the designation of these two contracted employees.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** I know that there is in fact a tremendous shortage at the Chambers of the DPP and I am not certain as to who is the two contracted employees.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, if I could ... we have twenty-one staff and we have heard about the two; could the Honourable Minister say where does the professional staff meaning State Counsels appear on the Staffing Details - under which category are they?

**Hon Doodnauth Singh:** It is under the Heading of Administration, it does not specifically refer to State Counsel, et cetera, but they would be part of the administrative structure of the Chambers.

**Agency 56 - Public Prosecutions, Programme 561 - Public Prosecutions - \$62,688,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates**

**The Chairperson:** Page 427 ...

**AGENCY 56 - SUPREME COURT - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Agency Totals**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$2,080,000 for Agency 56 - Supreme Court - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - stands part of the Estimates.

**Agency 56 - Supreme Court - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - \$2,080,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates**

**Assembly Resumed**

**The Acting Speaker:** Honourable Members, I think this is a convenient time for us to take the suspension for half an hour.

**17:00 H - SUSPENSION OF SITTING**

**15:47 H - RESUMPTION OF SITTING**

**The Acting Speaker:** Honourable Members we will now proceed with the Motion

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE  
ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY ON  
DEFINITE MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC  
IMPORTANCE**

**Unreasonable and unconscionable dislocation of  
Vendors in the Stabroek Market Area**

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mde Speaker, I was looking for the relevant Standing Order...

**The Acting Speaker:** ... Standing Order No. 20 (g)

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mde Speaker, Standing Order No 20 (g) ... I have been officially informed that the vendors have now taken this matter to Court and it is now in the High Court where they are seeking a restraining order and therefore Standing Order 20(g) makes this matter sub judice. I therefore wish to move that that Standing Order be taken into account.

**The Acting Speaker:** If that is so, indeed it says here, question shall not reflect on the decision on a Court of law and no question shall be asked on any matter which is sub judice.

Mr Corbin is the matter ... ?

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** Mde Speaker, I cannot confirm the veracity, but I would hope that the Minister will tell the House that that is so, but the issue that I want to raise had to do with the Cricket World Cup and even though it reflects on the principle of the removal of these vendors by the City Council, it is a question on which the entire country could be affected on the basis of the World Cup and the excuse of the World Cup being used to erode on rights which have accrued. I do not know what evidence the Minister has that this matter is in court, but unto when I came here this afternoon ... I met with the vendors this morning - representatives of the persons I am representing - there are four categories of people out there:

There are those who got notices in writing to remove in seven days; I believe that that matter is before the Court. They have legitimate rights and they have gone to the Courts. I am aware of that.

I am also aware that there is another group who got notice for forty-eight hours to remove verbally; and

There is a third group, all of whom met with me this morning, representing various categories who have told

me that they have not gone to the Court, because they are poor people and that is why they sought intervention and that group is a group that was given absolutely no notice. As I stated in my Motion, this group of people were encouraged by the City Council to improve their booths and were told by them to remove.

So I do not know that that particular group, as far as I am aware have not gone to the Courts. They told me that today and that is before I came to this Parliament. They expect that I will represent their issues. They have not gone to the Courts - that group that I am representing and the issues are different.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Honourable Member Mr Trotman, would you like to add your voice?

**Mr Raphael GC Trotman:** To be of assistance to you, Mde Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr Raphael GC Trotman:** Mde Speaker, I believe that there is a distinction between a question being put on a Motion and a matter which is raised for discussion as a matter as being definite, urgent and of public importance. The request this afternoon is for a discussion and therefore no question is being put; there is no resolution and if one was to read Standing Order No. 12, it says:

*... For the purpose of discussing a matter of urgent public importance ...*

Standing Order No. 20(g) says:

*No question which refers to a matter that is sub judice ...*

In other words the House has not been asked any question that is whether we are in favour or not and so it is akin to a Member standing and giving a personal explanation or making an announcement or seeking a discussion without the question being put. If the question is being put then I would submit. *[Interruption]*

**The Acting Speaker:** Honourable Member, Mr Trotman, would you sit for a while. Honourable Minister, would you also sit for a while?

I think both sides are looking at the wrong Standing Order. The Standing Order is question is Standing Order No. 26 and on Standing Order No. 26(g) it states:

### **Admissibility of Motion**

*In order that a Motion may be admissible, it shall satisfy the following conditions namely:*

*(a) to (i)*

And (g) states:

*It shall not relate to any matter which is under adjudication by a Court of Law.*

And I think that this is quite wide to curtail this matter; it shall not relate to any matter which is under adjudication by a Court of Law. This appears to be very quite wide even though the type of motion that you are saying, Mr Trotman ...

**Mr Moses V Nagamootoo:** May I Mde Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes, but having concluded ... Mr Trotman was on his feet, but I just asked to sit, so that I can correct him. I know that he was not finished and that is why I am allowing him to continue. Everybody will get a chance to add their voice.

Yes, Mr Trotman, go ahead.

**Mr Raphael GC Trotman:** I accept. The Motion for the adjournment of the House is not a motion ... it is just that we are seeking a suspension of the Standing Orders.

If for example there is a motion before the House to discuss the movement of vendors that is the motion, Madame. In other words, that is the distinction I wish to draw to your attention that the request this afternoon is a motion to adjourn this House that is to suspend the Standing Orders temporarily that is to allow a discussion of a matter.

If for example Mr McAllister has put in a motion which is seconded and that motion seeks to discuss a matter that is substantively before the Courts then it is disallowed.

That is my interpretation which I urge you to consider. The two things are separate and apart. Madame, the Motion is only to suspend the Standing Orders so that we may discuss a matter. In the same way for example a Minister may reply at the end of a debate and so forth. They are two distinctly different things. And that I urge you to consider.

**The Acting Speaker:** I do not know who wants to go first.

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mde Speaker, I hope that this does not turn out to be a lawyers' jamboree. I think we all have equal rights.

**The Acting Speaker:** Lawyers do not usually have that, Mr Rohee. [*Laughter*]

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Okay, I am very happy to hear that. We all have rights in this House.

Mde Speaker, Standing Order No. 26 states at the beginning;

*In order that a motion may be admissible, it shall satisfy the following condition:*

And one of the conditions is that the discussion should not proceed, because the matter is now in Court. I cannot envisage how we could proceed in a substantive discussion on a matter which is now in the courts and I am very surprised to see that Members of Parliament who

are supposed to be learned are seeking to violate the Standing Orders.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Honourable Member Mr Nagamootoo

**Mr Moses V Nagamootoo:** Mde Speaker, the request having been made by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to move a Motion does not by itself mean the motion has not been moved. Now what would preclude a motion from being moved? The motion would be precluded from being moved if it violates the Standing Order of the House. In the first instance, the Subcommittee of the Business Committee of the House had allocated a defined number of days to consider the Estimates in the Committee of Supply and by way of Motion there is a motion before this House for the approval of those Estimates. The Standing Order is very clear and I quote Standing Order No. 73 (2), which states very clearly that -

*Upon any day allotted under paragraph (i) which is there shall be allotted a maximum of seven days for the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure in Committee of Supply; then upon any date allotted under paragraph (1) of the Standing Order ... [Interruption]*

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Speaker, on a point of order, you have already ruled on that issue. You have already ruled that the House will stand adjourn after the suspension to discuss the Motion. I am not speaking about Minister Rohee's point. I am speaking about the

point that my learned friend is seeking to make to take us back to before you made that rule and you have ruled that despite the fact that we are in a Committee of Supply essentially to deal with the Estimates, you have ruled the House will stand adjourned. And is it that the Honourable Member is now asking you to revisit your ruling? The ruling stands.

**Mr Moses V Nagamootoo:** Mde Speaker, with utmost humility and respect for my learned colleague, you have made no such ruling. Under Standing Order No. 12, what is before this House is a request to move the Motion? The Motion has not been moved. Standing Order No. 12 (3) sets out the procedure where the eighteen Members have risen. The Motion shall over until 4:30 p.m. on the same day and at that time any proceedings in which the Assembly is engaged shall be postponed until the motion for the adjournment is disposed of. The Motion for the adjournment has not been disposed of, because there is not motion here. There is a motion for a request to have the adjournment to discuss a matter of definite urgent public importance. That was the request to which eighteen Members stood up and you, Mde Speaker, had simply acquiesce at that point that at a certain point 4:30 p.m., this Motion shall then come on board. I am saying that under Standing Order No. 73 (2), since there is a subsisting Motion before this House to consider the Estimates by the Committee of Supply and that a Motion of allocation of time has been before this House that no dilatory motion shall be entertained by this House. Erskine May has said it very clearly, because some of

these rules, I agree, have been open to some varying interpretation that anything that comes in between a substantive motion before this Parliament is dilatory; it dilutes what is before the House ... *[Interruption]*

**The Acting Speaker:** What Standing Order are you talking about?

**Mr Moses V Nagamootoo:** I am referring to Standing Order No. 73 (2). It states here and I will read it:

*Upon any day allocated under Paragraph (1) of this Standing Order, no dilatory motion shall be moved except by a Minister upon proceedings upon the Estimates of Expenditure and such proceedings shall not be interrupted or postponed under any Standing Order.*

The Motion before this House is a continuation of the Motion for the approval of the Budget. The Budget Speech is one part of that Motion. The other part of the Motion is that the House resolves itself into Committee of Supply and the Sub-Committee of the Business Committee of the House of which you are the Chair, Mde Speaker, resolves to have time allocated for these debates in the Estimates of the Committee of Supply. So therefore another motion to supersede a motion by this House is improper. I submit with utmost respect that the dilatory motion before this House is to subvert the mainstream discussion of a matter of utmost importance which is the national Budget on which, because of the fiduciary nature of the instrument we are discussion should take precedent over all other discussions. No

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House that subscribes to Erskine May's and to Western Parliamentary democracy would have tolerated the derailment of a Motion by the Committee of Supply by time allocated for its discussion into three days would have entertained this request, even if I go beyond the request a motion that is now coming before this House.

Now, the issue, Mde Speaker, is the question of admissibility and the question of admissibility of the motion has been challenged on the fact of the subject matter of the motion being sub judice.

And not only that under the same Standing Order No. 26 (g) , it is clearly stated here:

It shall not relate to any matter which is under adjudication by the Court.

The next important Standing Order No 26 (i). The reason preferred by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition why this matter he felt qualified is that government Ministers or Ministries *may* be involved. His word was *may* and therefore in (i):

It shall not relate to a matter with which the Government is not officially concerned. This motion is not concerned; this is the municipality which has a distinct legal status; a distinct legal persona under law and this action in the Courts is against the City Council.

Mde Speaker, my submission is on all scores of sub judice and the subject matter not concerning the Government and in fact the attempt to derail the

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consideration of the national Budget in which all the citizens of this country are involved to consider an escapade on a tarmac in the streets in Georgetown is an attempt to introduce a dilatory tactic to frustrate the debate on the Budget and it should not be entertained. It would be unlawful. *[Applause]*

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes, Honourable Member Mr Corbin

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** I do not propose to speak again on this matter. In all my years, I have always been very respectful of rulings of Speakers in this House and I have had all kinds on this particular matter. I think the Hansard will show that I have had many motions raised on this item which formally Standing Order No 11 (2) in the old Standing Order and it is now Standing Order No. 12 in the revised Standing Order.

I once suffered from the elusion as some of my colleagues are suffering from today that this motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders provided an opportunity for a substantive motion to be moved on a matter of public importance and if once would look at my previous attempts to move motions of this kind; I have always appended a motion when I rose on this matter. The learned Speaker in a letter to me, I think, it was at the time of the flood spend a great deal of his time to

elucidate on this matter. If I knew this discussion was going to come up, I would have walked with the letter which he wrote me, because I challenged his ruling in the media and he wrote me a lengthy piece suggesting and defining what this Standing Order is all about. And in fact, what he did say ... the only motion that comes up at this time is the motion to suspend the Standing Order and that you are not permitted to bring a substantive motion under this Standing Order, but it permits a discussion on some issue of public importance, because I was in the habit of bringing a motion every time I sought a suspension to get a resolution, but he amplified and brought the difference out. I only want to elucidate on that point and the motion about the adjournment, I believe, had already been passed and that has been determined. What is at issue now, I believe, is the question whether there is an issue of the matter before the court. I have already made my submission that I am unaware and I do not know whether the Honourable Member has concrete information and I would submit that if indeed this matter is before the court, I would be the first to withdraw and not proceed with it. I say this, but I am saying that unto the time I came to this Parliament, half an hour before, the people that I am speaking about made it clear to me that they had made no moves to the court, because they felt that their case was so air tight, because they were there at the sufferance of the Council. As I said, I know there is another category of people - those people with the permanent stalls, who were paying not only rents; they were paying in fact taxes on the physical structures. Those people with their

receipts for rates and taxes on the physical structures out there, they are the people who said, they were going to the court, because the Council ... [*Interruption: 'Payment of rates and taxes now.'*] ... yes, rates and taxes out there, so that they are the people who went to the court. I am not dealing with that matter, but as I said I will submit myself to your ruling. I do not propose to speak on this matter again; I think that even the debate on the Standing Orders has provided a lot of ventilation of the issue.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Speaker, if I could just mention one thing is that we have the Leader on the one hand saying that as far as he is aware, nothing was filed and he went so far as to say that if he was satisfied he would immediately withdraw the Motion. The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs got up and said that something was filed. Where is the evidence? What is the action number; what can he refer to? And I would say, Madame that in the absence of that we have to presume that nothing was filed, there is nothing before us and go ahead. You just cannot get up and say willy-nilly something was filed.

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mde Speaker, I believe that when any Member of this House stands to speak on a matter of this nature, with all due respect to what the Honourable Member has just said especially when a Minister of Government stands to speak, there is a lot of credibility at stake here. I would not stand before this Honourable House as a responsible person and make a

statement, as the Honourable Speaker is trying to impugn that this is not the case. I have been reliably informed and I think it is my duty to inform the Honourable House that I am so informed. It is for the Speaker now to rule. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Okay, I think I have heard enough, Honourable Members. As I said, Mr Rohee said he is an honourable gentleman - an honourable Member in this House - and there is a rule that you should not lie to this House.

I have to say to this House that I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that this is not a motion in the real sense of the motion. It is called a motion, but it is not debated, there is no resolve clause, there is no motion paper; it is just a request to move the adjournment of the House to bring definite matters of public importance. It is called a motion to fit into some slot in our rules, but it does not take any form of a motion; it is a mere discussion, nothing at the end of it; it is not voted on or anything of that nature. But on the other hand, there are certain rules that go along with it, which says that the timing is forty-five minutes. As I said there are certain rules, it has to fit in the ambit of the Standing Orders and so it takes the position of a motion whilst not being a motion; it is a sort of funny situation. But the admissibility ... I am very impressed with this that it should not relate to any matter which is under adjudication by court of law and also the dilatory aspect that Mr Nagamootoo pointed out to me. I should say frankly, I was told by the supportive staff, the

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Clerk and the Secretary, who is also a very knowledgeable lady that nothing intervenes in the allotment time for the Committee of Supply, but this part was not brought to my attention and I did not read it for myself that no dilatory motion ... there again the word *motion* keeps coming up all the time that shall intervene in the three days that we allot for this business here - the Estimates - that we are under. I really feel that I should not, even though preliminarily we granted the consent to the opposition to go ahead with the motion. I think at this stage having advised myself of these various clauses, although it is not a traditional motion, it takes the way of a motion in this Honourable House and I think that at this stage, Mr Corbin, I can no longer sustain this application to go ahead.

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** ... Much obliged ...

**The Chairperson:** We shall now return to the Committee of Supply to continue the consideration of the estimates

### **IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 84 and 85 ...

**AGENCY 14 - PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY,  
Programme 141 - Public Service Management**

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Question is proposed that the sum of \$210,997,000 for Agency 14 - Public Service Ministry, Programme 141 - Public Service Management - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mr Basil Williams

**Mr Basil Williams:** Mde Chairperson, if I might respectfully seek to compress Account Codes 6111 and 6117, where there is the total wages bill for the Ministry of \$40,661,000 and when we look at the Staffing Details, we see that there are fourteen contracted employees out of a total work force of forty-nine. Could the Honourable Minister explain how fourteen contracted workers are estimated to receive over sixty percent of the total wage Bill for the Public Service Ministry while on the other hand thirty-five members of the traditional Public Service are estimated to have only \$18,000,000 which is around forty percent of the total wages bill? So could the Honourable Minister explain how fourteen workers are estimated to receive \$22.6 million out of \$40,000,000 and thirty five workers from the traditional Public Service are estimated to receive only \$18,000,000 out of that \$40,000,000.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Public Service

**Hon Dr Jennifer RA Westford:** Mde Chairperson, those fourteen contracted workers occupy very senior positions in the Public Service Ministry even though the Member did not ask the designation of those fourteen

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workers, for his benefit and for the benefit of this House, I will name them:

- The Chief Training Officer, who receives a salary of \$145,000 and that position even though it is a contractor worker it is in the establishment and as I said before workers can opt for being on the contract or being on the personable establishment and for his benefit also that salary falls within the band of the Chief Training Officer who is on band 12.

- We have a Disaster Management Training Officer which is also a position of the establishment and falls on Band 8 and he is receiving \$76,000 and he is also within the Band.

- We have two Management Services Consultants;

- three ITC Consultants;

- One Confidential Secretary who is supposed to be on Band 6, getting a salary of \$52, 536, which also falls within the salary scale of the band.

- We have four Systems Support Officers; and

- We have the Permanent Secretary whose salary if \$347,000.60 and that amounts to that sum.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Basil Williams

**Mr Basil Williams:** If it pleases you, Mde Chairperson, could the Honourable Member indicate whether those staffing positions for the contracted employees are also positions in the traditional Public Service.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Public Service

**Hon Dr Jennifer RA Westford:** Mde Chairperson, I think I have just answered that question.

**Mr Basil Williams:** But if that is so and you have appointed contracted workers outside of the Traditional Public Service; do you have any parallel positions for those positions in the traditional Public Service establishment? That is my question.

**Hon Dr Jennifer RA Westford:** Mde Chairperson, I have just explained all of that. I just said that persons have an option; they can opt for being on the pensionable establishment or to get contract gratuity and once those positions are filled by contract gratuity, it is assumed that they are also filled on the establishment of the Ministry.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Leader of the Opposition

**Hon Robert HO Corbin:** A supplementary question, Mde Chairperson ... Is it now a new policy position of the Ministry of the Public Service that this is the new form that government employment will take that public servants can now opt for whether they want to be on the

pensionable establishment or opt for contract or whether this applies to the entire public service?

**Hon Dr Jennifer RA Westford:** That has always been there and applies to the entire public service.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Basil Williams

**Mr Basil Williams:** A supplementary question - Does it follow that if a party opts for the contracted position, that position in the traditional public service collapses; it disappears altogether?

**Hon Dr Jennifer RA Westford:** There is nothing like collapsing. That position is there, it remains there.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6302 - Training (Including Scholarships) - In the first place, does it include scholarships? In the second instance, do these scholarships include post graduate scholarships?

**The Chairperson:** The Hon Minister of the Public Service

**Hon Dr Jennifer RA Westford:** Yes, it includes scholarships and yes it includes post graduate scholarships.

**Dr George A Norton:** Can you mention a few areas - just a few?

**Hon Dr Jennifer RA Westford:** Medical sciences, agricultural sciences principally

**Agency 14 - Public Service Ministry, Programme 141 - Public Service Management - \$210,997,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Page 403 ...

**AGENCY 14 - PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Agency Totals**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$14,500,000 for Agency 14 - Public Service Ministry - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - stands part of the Estimates.

**Agency 14 - Public Service Ministry - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - \$14,500,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 108 and 109 ...

**AGENCY 23 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM,  
INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, Programme 231 -  
Main Office**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$266, 505,000 for Agency 23 - Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Programme 231 - Main Office - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Mr Dave Danny ...

**Mr Dave Danny:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6255 - Maintenance and Other Infrastructure - there is an exorbitant sum of \$2,000,000 as compared to \$480,000, can the Honourable Minister give the location and why this exorbitant increase?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Mde Chairperson, if you look throughout this entire Programme 231, you will see significant increases in many heads, not only this one, and what is happening here is that the Guyana National Convention Centre is now coming under the Main Office of the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce. Under this head it is going to take care of the landscaping. We still have to do a lot of work on the landscaping of the Convention Centre. In fact \$1.2 million will go towards the Convention Centre to continue keeping the landscaping.

**Mr Dave Danny:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6272 - Electricity Charges - there is a great increase here with

more than almost double in the Electricity Charges, can the Minister explain this?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Yes, that is being driven by the power demand of the Convention Centre.

**Mr Dave Danny:** Account Code 6273 - Water Charges - is also three times.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Yes, that too.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, supplementary question to Account Code 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure - in view of what the Honourable Minister has said, is the sum of \$2,000,000 sufficient Sir, now that you are saying that you are taking in the Convention Centre.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Yes, we have estimated that cost to be \$1.2 million and this is \$2,000,000 and it will adequately cover that and some works at places like the Exhibition Centre in Sophia.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** The reason why I am asking that, Honourable Minister, I am sure that you would have gone there recently and you would have seen that the landscaping need a lot of work. The building externally does not look very well. So that is why I am really genuinely concerned about this \$2,000,000.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** The initial work is being done by the Ministry of Public Works and there is another contract.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Oh, well you see, you did not tell me that.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** This will maintain ...

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Okay. Could I go to Account Code 6116 - Contracted Employees - we see that there has been a one hundred percent increase from seven to fourteen persons. Would the Honourable Minister be kind enough to inform us who are these seven new contracted employees - what positions not names?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** The seven new employees are the employees of the International Convention Centre. The General Manager is the highest paid at \$214,500; the lowest is the Cleaner at \$28,350.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Dave Danny ...

**Mr Dave Danny:** Account Code 6291 - National and other Events - Can the Honourable Minister say what these events are and what is hoped to be achieved from these events?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** In fact, I think that was also raised last year. The Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce supports in excess of forty national events throughout the country including Mashramani, the Expos in Moruca, Linden, Berbice, GUYEXPO; included here is the new Gift and Craft Show for CWC, also a \$5,000,000 allocation for the International Convention Centre, because they will also co-hosting quite a few events there.

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The big increase is about \$8,000,000; five of which is going to the Convention Centre. Also through this provision here helps to support a lot of national events; some of the persons who have to go overseas to represent Guyana, we help them with gifts and do forth.

**Mr Dave Danny:** What is hoped to be achieved from these events?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** The promotion of Guyana, domestic tourism, investment; it contributes towards economic development, selling of our country and so forth?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer ...

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** A supplementary question to that same head. Mr Minister, having indicated that this \$25,000,000 is to promote forty national events and the fact that you have already taken off \$5,000,000 for some item - I cannot remember for what - but you did call a head, so that leaves you with \$20,000,000.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Yes

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** If we are serious about tourism, how can \$20,000,000 be significant? I mean, are we serious or is it that we are abandoning tourism and moving strictly to casino gambling?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Mde Chairperson, if she wants a debate on casino gambling - the policy issue - I would be

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happy to stand up for another hour and talk about, but what happens here is we work in collaboration with the private sector. A lot of it is seed money and we work with a lot of significant partners in the private sector. In fact the Berbice Expo, that budget is about \$12,000,000. They get \$1,000,000; so this is about ten to twelve percent of a lot of events. [*Interruption: 'Plus the slush fund.'*] Not the slush fund, very active ... we help Regatta too, so do not talk.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Judith David-Blair ...

**Mrs Judith David-Blair:** Mde Chairperson, under Account Code 6281 - Security Services - I see an increase of over one hundred percent; can the Minister say which security service is this and an explanation for the increase?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** The huge jump is because of the Security Services - Federal Management - contracted to the International Convention Centre.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Deborah Backer ...

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations. When we look at Page 379, we see that the entire figure of \$136,320,000, all it says Main Office, I do not know if this supplements the \$25,000,000 from the line item I spoke about before, but could the

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Honourable Minister share with this House where this \$136,320,000 goes.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Mde Chairperson, I do not think the Honourable Member read the document correctly. If he turns to Page 379, she will see the allocation to the Guyana National Bureau of Standards.... *[Interruption]*

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** No, no, no, no

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** You did not.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** You go ahead.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** If you add up those allocations there the Consumer Advisory Bureau \$500,000; the Guyana Consumers' Association \$500,000, the GNBS \$69,300,000; the Guyana Tourism Authority \$65,620,000; the Consumer Movement of Guyana \$400,000. That is \$136,000,000.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Thank you for that and now that you have brought it to my attention - Thank you so much Minister. The Guyana Tourism Authority Board \$66,808,000 last year and this year \$69,300,000; again if we are serious and want to make tourism, one of our main engines of growth, is this figure sufficient? I am not quarrelling about the figure, I am quarrelling about the lowness of the figure, not the highness - the sufficiency.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Mde Chairperson, I think she incorrectly quoted. She used the Guyana National Bureau of Standards numbers. Last year for GTA was actually

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\$55,000,000; this year it is \$65,000,000 and for now it is going to be sufficient, because this not the only source that we access to promote Guyana. That is also supported by USAID - the Guyana Trade and Investment Support Programme; US \$125,000 last year put into training to run from mid last year to mid of this year. Then we also have the birding and the yachting programmes to the tune of over US \$70,000 that is also supported by GTIS. This is also supplemented by the Private Sector - the Private Sector sponsors along with Government most of the overseas trips. It is a partnership and you can easily double that event to effectively see what this \$65,000,000 sees in terms of the value of our marketing effort at home and overseas.

**Agency 23 - Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Programme 231 - Main Office - \$266,505,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 110 and 111 ...

**AGENCY 23 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, Programme 232 - Ministry Administration**

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Question is proposed that the sum of \$39,942,000 for Agency 23 - Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Programme 232 - Ministry Administration - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mrs Backer ...

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, just let me make sure that I am at the right pages - 110 and 111 - Account Code 6281 - Security Services - we see an increase of just over one hundred percent; my question is two-fold:

- (i) Which security service; and
- (ii) What additional building or buildings are being provided for in this new Estimate?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Account Code 6281, what is coming into the Estimates here is the security at the Minister's residence and that is Federal Management. That is one and then this also takes care of four RK's Security at the Main Office

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** A supplementary question, is the Minister saying that last year we had a figure of \$3,243,000 that the Minister's House was not benefiting from security services?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** The then Minister last year used the regular Police Special Constabulary.

**Mr Dave Danny:** Account Code 6115 - Semi Skilled Operatives and Unskilled - Can the Minister say what is the designation of these operatives?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Basically these are the cleaners and the handyman we have around the Ministry.

**Agency 23 - Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Programme 232 - Ministry Administration - \$39,942,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 112 and 113 ...

**AGENCY 23 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, Programme 233 - Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$36,520,000 for Agency 23 - Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Programme 233 - Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** COA 6116 - Contracted Employees - five, could the Honourable Minister indicate

to us what are the functions these five contracted employees.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** There are three Commerce Officers, one Senior Commerce Officer; an Industrial Development Officer in the Industry Division; and also a Research Assistant. Do you want the Salary Scale? The Research Assistant gets \$31,500 - the lowest paid; the Senior Commerce Officer \$82,185.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Ms Deborah H Backer:** Account Code 6302 - Training (Including Scholarships) - Could the Honourable Minister share with us ... \$2,300,000 is this internal training for your staff only and if so where?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** The internal training for the staff is handled under Programme 1, but this specifically deals with the Bamboo Craft Training Programme that has started about three years ago and under this item, we will also incorporate the training under the Small Business Council.

Mde Chairperson, this is the technical part of the Ministry's programme, so this will be the technical work.

**Agency 23, Ministry to Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Programme 233 - Commerce, Industry**

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and Consumer Affairs - \$36,520,000 - agreed to and  
ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Page 408 ...

**AGENCY 23 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM,  
INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE - CAPITAL  
EXPENDITURE - Agency Totals**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$239,217,000 for Agency 23 - Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Project Code 2403600 - Land Transport - The Legend tells us provision for final payment and when you look at the Profile page you just see it is repeated actually. It just says the project entails provision for final payment. I am sure it was an oversight. My question to the Honourable Minister ... final payment for what?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** For a vehicle.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Now that I see that the total project cost is \$12,826,000 - I am still on Page 73 on the

Capital Project Profile - Would the Minister be kind enough to tell this House what is the type of this vehicle.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Mde Chairperson, that \$1.9 million was the final payment for a vehicle. The \$12,000,000 purchased two vehicles and this was a supplementary from last year. The types of vehicles are:

- Pathfinder; and
- A Toyota Fortuna

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Project Code 4100100 - Tourism Development - We see a figure here of \$9,000,000 budgeted and the Legend tells us, provisions for seawall development and information booths and the Profile page tells us the same thing and it says here the project includes the construction of booths and seawall development plan, CWC. I do not know if that means Cricket World Cup, because if it is, then we want to know which world cup? Seeing that this project has not started, my question to the Minister is: How many booths plans have we planned to start and complete before CWC gets here?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Mde Chairperson, we will complete some booths before Cricket World Cup, but we would not have these permanent booths. What is covered here are some benches for the Sea wall and information

centres that would be located in Lethem preparing for the opening of the Takatu River Bridge and there is one slated also for Georgetown - a walk-in centre.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Honourable Minister, you are saying benches for where?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** The seawall - the benches there are between ... the last set we put up was in 2002 and previous to that it was fifteen to twenty-five years ago.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** And could I respectfully ask ... I do not want to go to the other Regions; I am speaking about the seawall in Region 4, where would these booths be placed, Mr Minister? In what area - from where to where?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** The benches for the seawall ...  
*[Interruption]*

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** No, the booths!

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** The booths are going to be in a very central location in the city centre as a walk-in tourism facility. As I said, the other one is in Lethem preparing for the traffic from the South.

**Hon Deborah J Backer:** A supplementary question - Of the \$9,000,000, what portion would go towards the Seawall Development Plan?

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** It is about \$2,000,000.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Khemraj Ramjattan

**Mr Khemraj Ramjattan:** Project Code 4502500 - Competitiveness Programme - I notice the Legend says, provision for the implementation for the Competitiveness Programme and on the Profile I notice very abstractly stated there, the project entails enhancing investment, supporting private enterprise. Apart from this generally vague category of what it entails, are firms going to be given monies to ensure that they are supported and which of those firms are private enterprise.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Mde Chairperson, this is the start-up of the Competitiveness Programme, which has about four specific deliverables including working with some entities - the umbrella group - but this is just the start up. That programme is in excess of \$18,000,000 and I think we have had a full debate on that and the Honourable Member himself said that he clandestinely had to get copies, which was already on the internet. I do not know about the clandestineness, but this is the start-up and we are envisaging the programme to get going by mid year. This will start the payment of salaries, running cost expenses for the offices, the equipment and so forth.

**Mr Khemraj Ramjattan:** I got the impression that during the entire year - this year - for the spending of \$160,000,000, what are you saying about the \$18,000,000.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** This is a programme that spans over five years. This is the start-up of the programme. This is the IDB Competitiveness Programme, which the Honourable Member had access to all of the documentation. I think that is going to be tabled shortly in the House too.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** A supplementary question on Project Code 4100100 - Tourism Development - Provision for seawall development and information booths - Initially when I read the Legend, I thought I was mistaken, because I got the impression it was speaking to both things - the seawall development and information booths vis-à-vis seawall. The Honourable Minister in answering in question referred to one or two other regions, but it was just drawn to my attention, when you looked at the Profile page and this is page 76, it says very specifically that this Project is confined to Region 4 and as such it must have been an oversight or over-exuberance on the part of the Minister to tell me about other things going up in hinterland locations.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Mde Chairperson, the intent here was to look at both Region 9 and Region 4, but one of the issues in terms of the allocations of resources, many times when one puts up a request to the Ministry of Finance and an allocation is given after the discussions - the bilateral -

sometimes you may have a slip of a number here or there - that happens.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Is the Minister then accepting that the answer he gave does not fit in to what is printed on page 76 of the Capital Project Profile.

**Hon Manzoor Nadir:** Madame, the intent here is to do as I said exactly.

**Agency 23 - Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - \$239,217,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Honourable Members this concludes that Ministry. We will now turn to Pages 92 and 93 ...

**AGENCY 16 - MINISTRY OF AMERINDAIN AFFAIRS, Programme 161 - Amerindian Development**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$184,624,000 for Agency 16 - Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Programme 161 - Amerindian Development - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Dr George Norton

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Staffing Details 6116 - Contracted Employees - Could the Honourable Minister kindly list the designations of these six contracted workers?

**Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett:** Mde Chairperson, I would be happy to do that.

- Two community Development Officers;
- One Credit Officer in the Moruca area for the Credit Programme there;
- One Assistant Credit Officer;
- One Caretaker; and
- One Assistant Caretaker for the Mahaicony Hostel to cater for the Morakabai students.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local and International Organisations. Could the Honourable Minister say what criteria are used in selecting organisations or what qualifies the organisations for this subsidies or contributions?

**Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett:** This subsidy here goes to the North Rupununi Credit Scheme and it is for stationery, operational cost for the office. Actually it was a project that we started some time in 2000 with

assistance from UNDP and the Government had made a commitment then to assist this local organisation in its operational costs.

**Dr George A Norton:** I still ask what qualifies them or what criteria are you using just in case there exists another organisation that might require such a thing.

**Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett:** We do not have at this point in time in the Ministry a criterion as such, because this is the only organisation. Like I said, it was part of an agreement with the UNDP and the only one that continues to ask every year.

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, in other words it depends on whether the organisation ask or not.

**Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett:** Yes, Mde Chairperson, and we will be happy to consider them based on the resources at our disposal.

**Dr George A Norton:** Honourable Minister, you said they have been asking year after year and they have been receiving the subsidy. Are the funds audited?

**Hon Carolyn Rodrigues:** Yes, Mde Chairperson. Actually it is audited and I should mention that this is the operational cost in terms of stationery and we pay the other two staff as well - as I mentioned Credit Officers. We also look at the kind of service that the organisation provides.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6302 - Training (Including Scholarships) - does it include scholarships and if it does include scholarships, does it include foreign scholarships?

**Hon Carolyn Rordrigues-Birkett:** In fact the whole programme is about scholarships. No foreign scholarships here; this is for the Hinterland Scholarship Programme for the Secondary Schools and the technical institutions in Georgetown.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton

**Dr George A Norton:** Account Code 6131 - Other Direct Labour Cost - Could the Honourable Minister say what other direct labour costs are entailed under this Code?

**Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett:** This is for overtime and acting allowances.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6222 - Field Materials and Supplies -there has been a relative increase in the allocation to the field materials and supplies, could the Honourable Minister say the reason for this.

**Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett:** As I mentioned earlier, we have employed six new officers and all of them are actually in the fields, but the ones that would benefit in addition to what we already have would be the

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two Community Development Officers and the two Credit Officers that are in the Region.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Staffing Details - COA 6113 - Other Technical and Craft Skilled ... Could the Honourable Minister kindly state the designation of the other newly employed ; the other technical and craft skilled?

**Hon Carolyn Rodrigue-Birkett:** One Personnel Officer.

**Agency 16 - Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Programme 161 - Amerindian Development - \$184,624,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates**

**The Chairperson:** Page 405 ...

**AGENCY 16 - MINISTRY OF AMERINDIAN AFFAIRS - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE -Agency Totals**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$150,190,000 for Agency 16 - Ministry of Amerindian Affairs - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Dr Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 1400100 - Amerindian Development Fund - Could the Honourable Minister state which are the villages earmarked for the demarcation.

**Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett:** Certainly Mde Chairperson, Warapoka, Santa Cruz, Kamwatta and Arukamai in Region 1; St Denise in Region 2; Kaburi and Karow in Region 7; Campbell Town and Micobie in Region 8; Fairview, Annai and Apoteri, Rewa and Crashwater in Region 9.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 2403000 - Water Transport - Amerindian Affairs - the Legend says Purchase of boats and outboard engines - Could the Honourable Minister say which villages are these boats and outboard engines are purchased for?

**Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett:** Certainly Mde Chairperson, Kamwatta Hotoqui, Hobadaia, St John in the Waini, Asakata, Kokerite and Santa Cruz in Region 1, Cubanai in Retion Seven, the Macushi Researchers in Bena Hill and Karasabai; Haimacabra and St Monica in Region 2.

The Honourable Member Mrs Backer ...

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, going back to Project Code 1400100 - Amerindian Development Fund - the Honourable Minister gave us a list of villages that would benefit from demarcation, my question to the Honourable Minister is what part of the \$100,000,000 identified under this general head will go towards the demarcation programme?

**Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett:** \$46,640,000

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr James McAllister ...

**Mr James K McAllister:** Mde Chairperson, some clarification here, Project Code 1400100 - Amerindian Development Fund - I wish to ask the Honourable Minister is there is any special arrangement for the administration of the fund or if it is really expenditure out of the Minister itself.

**Hon Carolyn Rodrigues- Birkett:** Yes, this is the name of the fund. It is actually our capital budget.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Project Code 2403100 - Land Transport - Could the Honourable Minister say if these motor cycles would be used at the Head Office or in the villages in the Regions.

**Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett:** Actually it is one motor cycle, but we are also purchasing seven of the

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ATVs mostly for the Pakaraimas. As you know the terrain there ... so we buy the ATVs for Kato, Itabac and Cheong Mouth and also Kakabaru and one for Matthews Ridge.

**Agency 16 - Ministry of Amerindian Affairs - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - \$150,190,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 158 and 159 ...

**AGENCY 46 - GEORGETOWN PUBLIC HOSPITAL CORPORATION, Programme 461 - Public Hospital**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$2,247,145,000 for Agency 46 - Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, Programme 461 - Public Hospital - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Dr Norton

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister state the designation added to administrative staff.

**The Chairperson:** Which Code?

**Dr George A Norton:** COA 6111 - Administrative

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health

...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** The added administrative person is a clerical staff in the Human Resource Department.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton

...

**Dr George A Norton:** A similar question on the Staffing Details - COA 6112 - Senior Technical - Could the Honourable Minister say what is the designation of the Senior Technicals that have been added to his staff?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health

...

**Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** The positions are senior nurses.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton

...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6221 - Drugs and Medical Supplies - Could the Honourable Minister say if in the Drugs and Medical Supplies eye drops will be included? *[Laughter]*

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health

...

**Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** All the drugs that are included in the essential drug list will be included.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Account Code 6241 - Rental and Buildings - Could the Honourable Minister say what buildings have been rented and for what purpose?

**Hon Dr Leslie Ramsammy:** Nine buildings have been rented mostly for the physician staff.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Khemraj Ramjattan ...

**Mr Khemraj Ramjattan:** Madame, I notice in Account Code 6116 - Contracted Employees - have contracted by six, but we have the salaries increasing by \$10,000,000 more. Has there been an increase in the salaries of existing contracted employees?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Yes, the five percent increase that was given was paid by the Ministry of Finance for 2006 and now those will be included in the Budget.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Basil Williams

**Mr Basil Williams:** What are the categories of those contracted workers?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Most of the contracted employees are physicians, specialist doctors.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** The same Account Code - Honourable Minister, are any of the contracted employees nurses?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Yes

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** How many of that 145 please? You did say most were doctors, but the question is specifically for nurses.

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** I cannot give that breakdown immediately.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Okay. Account Code 6243 - Janitorial and Cleaning Supplies - Am I correct Honourable Minister in assuming that this budgeted figure of \$20,000,000 is to clean the entire Georgetown Public Hospital for a period of one year? Am I correct or does it come also under some other head?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** This is just the cleaning materials.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** For the entire hospital or the entire year?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** For the entire hospital.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** When we look at it we see that there is about an \$8,000,000 increase; is that the hospital

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is so dirty that at the end of 2006 that we needed so much more money ... No, because it is a big jump; because you budget for \$12,000,000 in 2006; you only spend \$11.9 million and I presume, because we have heard from you about our four-star hospital that it was clean, so if \$11.9 million was sufficient in 2006 - that is what you spent - why is it a need now to spend \$20,000,000 on it?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** In 2003, if we can go back to that budget, you will see that we are now budgeting for the sum that we budgeted then. Between 2003 and 2006 we benefited from donations of cleaning materials. That has been used up so this year, we are budgeting for the entire amount that we need.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** You do not expect donations.

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** If we get them then we will save.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Account Code 6281 - Security Services - I do not want to disappoint some people on that side of the House. First of all, which security service or services provide security for Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation? Then I will have a follow-up question.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Total security at the hospital is provided by a contracted firm RK and also by an internal security staff that we have.

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**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** I noticed that although \$13.837 million was budgeted for 2007, we only used \$7.9 million in 2006 and in view of that we hear in the news and papers fairly often about security breaches in the hospital and who are taking out food and mattresses, et cetera - could you explain that drop in 2006 and do you anticipate that we will have a similar drop at the end of 2007?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** The budgeted sum is to cover the contract for the RK Security firm, but we monitor their presence at the hospital. There is a certain designated number of security points and very often the company does not supply enough people and that is why we have to use more and more of our internal security over time to cover that.

**Agency 46 - Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, Programme 461 - Public Hospital - \$2,247,145,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Page 419 ...

**AGENCY 46 - GEORGETOWN PUBLIC HOSPITAL CORPORATION - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE -Agency Totals**

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Question is proposed that the sum of \$35,000,000 FOR Agency 46 - Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mr James McAllister ...

**Mr James K McAllister:** Mde Chairperson, I give way to Dr Norton.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr George Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, this is a question to the Honourable Minister. Project Code 4500203 - Equipment - Medical - if the purchase of the medical equipment - the ultra sound equipment - is so done, because the hospital is improving in technology that is purchasing one of a higher quality or is it because the one that they have is presently not functioning.

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** This one is to add to what we have and these will be used in the wards and it is towards improving the technology.

**The Chairperson:** Honourable Members, I now put ...  
*[Interruption]*

**Mr James K McAllister:** Mde Chairperson, I am on my feet ...

**The Chairperson:** I thought you said that you will give way to Dr Norton.

**Mr James K McAllister:** Yes, so he can come before me.

**The Chairperson:** Go ahead.

**Mr James K McAllister:** Mde Chairperson, I wish to ask the Honourable Minister as it relates to a compressed both Project Codes 4500202 and 4500203, I see roughly \$34,000,000 for equipment for the hospital, are we to understand that given the small amount here that the hospital is properly equipped and in all departments and therefore is not really in need of much equipment.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health  
...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** The hospital will continue to add to our technology. The technology added at the Georgetown Hospital comes from a number of sources; this is one of the areas but on another capital item under the Ministry of Health we will come to more equipment.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton  
...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 4500203 - Equipment - Medical - the Legend says purchase of equipment, could the Honourable Minister say if the operating table that is earmarked is specifically earmarked for the neuro surgery department?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health

...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** It is not specifically for the neuro surgery department; it will be used in the operating theatre generally.

**Agency 46 - Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - \$35,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 164 and 165 ...

**AGENCY 47 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH, Programme 471 - Ministry Administration**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$496,317,000 for Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 471 - Ministry Administration - stands part of the Estimates.

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Staffing Details COA 6111 - Administrative - We have a decrease in the Administrative personnel here ... Could the Minister explain the increase in the wages paid?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health

...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Two persons who have retired contributed to the decrease to ten and the increased sum represents the increase that was paid last year, which was covered through the Ministry of Finance 's budget, it is now included in the 2007 Budget

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton

...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson. Account Code 6255 - Maintenance and Other Infrastructure - Could the Honourable Minister say what other infrastructure and maintenance he is referring to?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health

...

**Hon De Leslie S Ramsammy:** It is for the Ministry of Health compound - weeding, improving the fencing and so on.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - when we look at Page 380 where it is listed - I am just querying this, I have noticed that last year we budgeted \$200,000 for the David Rose Centre, but nothing was given to them and I have noticed this year, we have budgeted that figure again. I am just

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wondering why it appears that they did not get anything in 2006, because I would have thought that that is an outstanding contribution that goes to an organisation like that.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health  
...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** It is coming in another programme actually. The reason for that in the David Rose Centre we occupy space owned by the Guyana Council of Churches and we usually give them a small token amount to cover security, but in recent times - last year - instead of asking for their small subvention, they charged us for the security. So we have been paying outside of this.

**Mrs Deborah J backer:** A supplementary question - So this \$200,000 that comes back again in 2007 has nothing to do with giving them money towards the enhancement of the David Rose Centre, but just solely for security. Is that what you are saying, Sir?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** We gave them a small sum to cover their own expenses in the past. As I said, they are now requesting payment for security.

**Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 471 - Ministry Administration - \$416,317,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 166 and 167 ...

**AGENCY 47 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH, Programme 472 - Diseases Control**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$389,221,000 for Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 472 - Diseases Control - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Dr Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Staffing Details - COA 6116 - Contracted Employees - there has been a contracted employee who has been employed for this year. Could the Hon Minister give the designation of this contracted employee?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** A government Medical Officer

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, in spite of the fact that under Account Code 6302 - Training (Including Scholarships) - there was a reduction, yet we do have a princely sum of \$15,000,000 for training. Could the Honourable Minister say in what field or in what specific area this would be used up in?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health  
...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Mde Chairperson, there are various training TB, HIV, PMTCT Programme, chronic diseases, statistics, veterinary science and so on.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Account Code 6291 - National and Other Events - We see here budgeted for last year \$5,330,000 and revised same figure and the same figure comes back again. This suggests that this money is for a fixed something. There is no variation; it seems to be for something that is fixed in terms of the allocation. So my question is what is it that is covered under this head?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** There are various activities for national health days such as:

- World Aids Day;
- Hanson's;
- Diabetes;
- Malaria;
- Masses are also included.

This is not all of the money we used; it is coming from the Government's side, but it is in addition to the money

that we have used through our partners PAHO, PEPAL, Global Fund and so on.

**Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 472 - Diseases Control - \$389,221,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 168 and 169 ...

**AGENCY - MNISTRY OF HEALTH, Programme 473 - Primary Health Care Services**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$276,646,000 for Agency 473 - Ministry of Health -Primary Health Care Service - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Dr Norton

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Staffing Details COA 6116 - Contracted Employees - Could the Honourable Minister say what is the designation of that *contracted employee*?

**Hon Dr Leslie Ramsammy:** A new technical officer.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** A supplementary question - A technical officer in what specific field?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Surveillance

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6302 - Training (Including Scholarships) - referring specifically to Primary Health Care Services, could the Honourable Minister say what this training would entail?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Again, various training. This programme covers our MCH Programme, the EPI Programme, Environmental Health, the Dental Health Programme and so the Code would cover training in all of those areas for example, training in integrated management of childhood illness IMCI and integrated management of adult illnesses and so on.

**Agency 47 -Ministry of Health, Programme 473 - Primary Health Care Services - \$278,646,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 170 and 171 ...

**AGENCY 47 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH, Programme 474 - Regional and Clinical Services**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$961,851,000 for Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 474 - Regional and Clinical Services - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Dr Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6284 - Other goods and Services Purchased - Could the Honourable Minister explain this reduction; how they plan to go about it?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health ...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Mde Chairperson, Other covers the air fares and accommodation for the Chinese and the Cuban doctors mainly. The reason for the reduction, there is no reasonable reduction; we expect the Ministry of Health will fall short in this. This is one of the inappropriate allocations to the Ministry.

**The Chairperson:** Mde Chairperson, Staffing Details COA 6116 - Contracted Employees - Could the Honourable Minister name the designation of the contracted employee?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Two doctors and Administrative Assistant in the new Minister's Office.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Ms Jennifer Wade ...

**Ms Jennifer Wade:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - Could you please identify the buildings to be maintained?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health ...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** There is a number of health centres such as the No. 1 Dispensary in Georgetown. This Programme covers a number of health centres in addition Linden Hospital, Kwakwani Hospital and the Psychiatric Hospital.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6117 - Temporary Employees - unless there is a typographical error there is a substantial increase; could the Honourable Minister explain that?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** It is not a typographical error Mde Chairperson. It is true that there is one temporary employee, but we have also budgeted for the new persons that are coming for the Diagnostic Centres and for the Ophthalmology Centre. We expect approximately 150 Cuban physicians and this sum will cover the cost of their stipends in Guyana.

**Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 474 - Regional and Clinical Services - \$961,851,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 172 and 173 ...

**AGENCY 47 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH, Programme 475 - Health Sciences Education**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$260,750,000 for Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 476 - Health Sciences Education - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Dr Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6302 - Training (Including Scholarships) - Has this sum include any scholarships for health sciences education and if so in what field?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health ...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Mde Chairperson, this Code covers the training of the Community Health Workers; their stipends, tutor costs and so on.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Account Code 6294 - Other - What are the other operating expenses that the Minister is referring to here?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health  
...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Mainly it covers the stipend for our other training programmes, the nurses, medexes and so on. They are all given a stipend and this covers that.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable member Mrs Backer  
...

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, COA 6116 - Contracted Employees - The Staffing Details tells us that we had eight last year and we are at the same number, however, when you look at the budgeted figure for 2006, you will see \$30,410,000 budgeted, but we only use \$19,823,000 although we had eight. So it seems that there was some amount of over-budgeting there and now this year there is more or less the same figure, it has gone to \$20,816,000; could the Honourable Minister kindly explain or share with this House what led to this decrease between the budgeted figure and the actual last year.

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** We had budgeted in 2006 for eight contracted employees, but indeed we have an additional number of persons working that are paid through other agencies.

**Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 475 - Health Sciences Education - \$260,750,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 174 and 175 ...

**AGENCY 47 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH, Programme 476 - Standards and Technical Services**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$160,411,000 for Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 476 - Standards and Technical Services - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Dr Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Staffing Details COA 6116 - Contracted Employees - there are ten additional contracted employees - Could the Honourable Minister inform us, who are the contracted employees?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** This is a typographical mistake. It is till three, if you look in the budget line, you will see that this sum did not change.

**Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 476 - Standards and Technical Services - \$160,411,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Pages 176 and 177 ...

**AGENCY 47 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH, Programme 477 - Rehabilitation Services**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$119,683,000 for Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 477 - Rehabilitation Services - stands part of the Estimates.

**Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 477 - Rehabilitation Services - \$119,683,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.**

**The Chairperson:** Page 420 ...

**AGENCY 47 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Agency Totals**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$2,549,020,000 for Agency 47 - Ministry of Health - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Dr George Norton ...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 2400100 - Land and Water Transport - Could the

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Honourable Minister say how many ambulances have been earmarked for and for which areas?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health ...

**Hon Dr Lelsie S Ramsammy:** We are planning to purchase five ambulances for the four Diagnostic Centres and the Ophthalmology Centre.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr James McAllister ...

**Mr James K McAllister:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 2501800 - Office Furniture and Equipment - I wish to inquire which office is to get the beds, the bedside cupboards and so on under this project.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health ...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Mde Chairperson, most of the furniture and equipment that will be purchased with the \$11,000,000 will go to the four Diagnostic Centres and the Ophthalmology Centre.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr McAllister ...

**Mr James K McAllister:** Mde Chairperson, am I to understand that this is under the wrong head, because my understanding is that office equipment and furniture

would suggest that it is office equipment and furniture being bought for the office.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health  
...

**Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Mde Chairperson, obviously a hospital does not only have ECG machines and beds, it has offices, administrative offices and so on. Maybe the Honourable Member could come with me and I will show you them.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton  
...

**Dr George A Norton:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 2501900 - Equipment Medical - could the Honourable Minister say for which centre is this X-ray equipment for?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health  
...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Mde Chairperson, the X-ray equipment is for Kwakwani Hospital.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr McAllister ...

**Mr James K McAllister:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 4400200 - HIS/AIDS - Could the Honourable Minister say how much of this money is for the AIDS Programme, if any?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health

...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Mde Chairperson, all of this money is going towards the HIV Programme.

**Mr James K McAllister:** Mde Chairperson, why I ask this is that when I look at the description I see strengthening the management of curable sexual transmitted diseases - tuberculosis and strengthening the health information system. So this cause me to wonder if this money is indeed for AIDS, because unless the Honourable Minister is telling the Honourable House that we are now deeming AIDS curable.

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** The Honourable Member ought to know that globally there is a link between TB and HIV. A large number of TB patients are co-infected with TB and HIV.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Franklin ...

**Mr Everall N Franklin:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 4400200 - HIS/AIDS - Could the Honourable say if some of that money is geared towards the purchase of anti-retroviral drugs manufactured here in Guyana?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Mde Chairperson, no.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Ms Vanessa Kissoon ...

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**Ms Vanessa Kissoon:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 2501900 - Equipment Medical - I would just like the Honourable Minister to indicate when will the equipment be bought and put in place for Kwakwani?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health  
...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Mde Chairperson, as soon as the budget is passed, we will start the procurement process and we hope that the X-ray will be in place before the end of the first half of the year.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Dr Norton  
...

**Dr George A Norton:** Project Code 2502000 - Equipment - Could the Honourable Minister say for which Centre would be the intercom switchboard system?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health  
...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** The Ministry of Health

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Sheila Holder ...

**Mrs Sheila VA Holder:** Honourable Minister, Project Code 4400200 - HIS/AIDS - the CIDA Programme - I am interested in specifically in the Health Information System; what does that constitute?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** At this time, at the GUM Clinic; at the family centre in New Amsterdam, in the Georgetown Public Hospital Lab, in the TB clinic, we have computerised the out-patients' records. We are now building that into a full-fledged hospital medical computerised record, so that the doctors can obtain the total records of the patients. This is now going to be extended into a full-fledged out and in patient health information system, and it will be rolled out first throughout the Georgetown Hospital, and then to all the Regional Hospitals, and then covering the whole health sector so you will have a computerised record for doctors to have up-to-date information on any patient that comes through our system.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr James McAllister ...

**Mr James K McAllister:** Mde Chairperson, I seek a clarification here - Project Code 4401200 - Health Sector Programme - there is provision for institutional strengthening and I also note that there is provision for human resource development separately; I therefore wish to ask the Honourable Minister what will constitute the institutional strengthening?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health ...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Mde Chairperson, this Project Code covers construction cost for the Linden Hospital; construction cost for the new in-patient facility;

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there is also human resource development; generally building different technical areas including nursing, management, public health, environmental health and also strengthening the procurement system including the construction of a modern warehouse, so part of that money will go there and part of the money from this will also supplement the previous one, because the previous one is developing certain centres with HIV and this will enable us to extend it to the complete hospital system.

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mrs Backer  
...

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Mde Chairperson, Project Code 4400300 - Nutrition Programme - \$590,000,000 - and when I look at the Capital Project Profile, I see three items and the first one is the promotion of exclusive breast feeding through the training of Primary Health Workers and my question is, what portion of that \$590,000,000 will go towards the training of these Primary Health Care Workers?

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister of Health  
...

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** I would not be able to give you the percentage. This programme covers the provision of vouchers for women with children between the ages of six to twenty-four months. It also provides micro nutrient sprinkles for pregnant women and micro nutrient sprinkles for children. In addition it provides training for the nursing staff and so on in order for them

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to do health promotion work among the anti-natal population and it does help promotion work within the communities so that we could reduce anaemia.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Could the Minister be at all helpful, he said that he cannot give the House a percentage, but it is a fairly substantial figure of \$590,000,000 - could he give us a figure; is it \$10,000,000, is it over \$100,000,000? Perhaps I can then ask another question, how much of the money is to be used for the reduction of anaemia.

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** All of the money is towards the overall objective of reducing anaemia. That is what we are providing the vouchers, the food to be bought is stipulated with the money and the micro nutrient is targeting anaemia. All of this money is going towards providing better nutrition and with an overall objective of reducing anaemia in women and children.

**Agency 47 - Ministry of Health - Capital Expenditure - Agency Totals - \$2,549,020,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates**

**The Chairperson:** Honourable Members, that concludes the consideration of the Estimates. Honourable Members it is now a few minutes after 19:30h - the time that we usually break, but since we are almost close to the end of the day's activities, we have the Appropriation Bill and

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the Income Tax Bill and I am asking whether you would like to go through or take the break now. How do Members feel, should we go right through the process?

*[Members replied in the Affirmative]*

**Assembly Resumed**

This completes the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 2007 in the Committee of Supply

The Honourable Minister of Finance ...

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply considered the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2007 and approved of them as printed.

**Motion put and carried.**

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS Nos. 13 and 54**

**The Acting Speaker:** We will now proceed with the suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 13 and 54.

The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs ...

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mde Speaker, with your leave I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 13 and 54 to be suspended to enable the Appropriation Bill No. 9/2007 to be introduced at this stage.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion carried.**

## **BILLS - First Second and Third Readings**

### **ITEM 2 - APPROPRIATION BILL 2007 - Bill No. 9/2007 published on 2007-02-02**

*A Bill intituled, an Act to provide for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of Guyana for the fiscal year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2007, estimates whereof have been approved by the*

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*National Assembly, and for the appropriation of those sums for the specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Finance ...

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Speaker, in accordance with Paragraph 2 of Article 171 of the Constitution, I signify that Cabinet has recommended the Appropriation Bill 2007 - Bill No. 9/2007 for consideration by the National Assembly and I now present the Bill to the Assembly and move that it be read the first time.

**Question put and agreed to**

**Motion carried.**

**Bill read a First time**

**The Acting Speaker:** the Honourable Minister of Finance

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Speaker, I move that the Appropriation Bill 2007 be read a Second time.

**Question put and agreed to**

**Motion carried**

**Bill read a Second time.**

**The Acting Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Finance ...

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Speaker, I move that the Appropriation Bill 2007 - Bill No. 9/2007 be read the Third time and passed as printed.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion carried**

**Bill read a Third time and passed as printed.**

**The Acting Speaker:** We will now move to the other item

**ITEM 3 - INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL  
2007 - Bill No.10/2007 published on 2007-02-02**

*A Bill intituled, an Act to amend the Income Tax Act*

The Honourable Minister of Finance ...

**Hon Dr Ashni K Singh:** Mde Speaker, the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2007 - Bill No. 10/2007 is quite a simple piece of legislation. It seeks simply, as its title suggests; to amend the Income Tax Act to give effect to the measure announced in Budget 2007, with respect to

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the adjustment to the Income Tax Threshold or what is commonly called the Income Tax Threshold that is to say to increase from \$300,000 per annum to \$336,000 per annum, the amount of income that would be subject to income tax at zero percent or the amount of income that would not be subject to Income Tax.

Mde Speaker, as you will recall this measure was announced as part of the Budget Speech and indeed was the subject of the discussion and debate during the course of the debate that ensued over the past several days. It is now necessary of course for us to enshrine this measure into law and it is that context that this Bill is brought before this House and it gives me great pleasure to move that this Bill be read a Second time.

*(See Part III of III pg 161)*

# National Assembly Debates

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20th Sitting

14:50h

Tuesday 20 February 2007

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## **PART III (cont'd from PART II of III)**

### **Question proposed**

**The Acting Speaker:** The Honourable Leader of the Opposition ...

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** Mde Speaker, I am always tickled when the Honourable Minister of Finance begins by saying that this matter is a very simple one. [*Interruption: 'Disarming!' "Quite disarming, indeed, as my colleague suggests"*]

Mde Speaker, in principle we have no objection to the raising of the income tax threshold. Indeed, one would have hoped that after this lengthy debate in the Parliament on the Budget after explaining the difficulties which the working people this country are likely to experience not only as a result of the normal or should I say the inflation which we are experiencing at the moment. I do not want to enter into a controversy as to the rate of that inflation, but also because of the direct impact of the recent introduction of the Value-Added Tax, which has created

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severe hardships upon the people of this country and which, I think, has been fully ventilated by many stakeholders and the ordinary man in the street over the last few weeks. It is no secret that whatever the government attempts to say about the original plans of the Value-Added Tax, the reality is that the manner of its introduction, even though there has been some extension of the items that are now zero rated, the reality is that there has been an increase in the cost of living to the average citizen. In that context one would have expected, indeed I had hoped that the Minister of Finance would have come to this House suggesting more than just this minimal increase in a threshold which has been criticised during the Budget Debate. And also some additional measures which would be intended to ease the pressure which the average wage earner salaried worker particularly public servants are experiencing at the moment. We have not seen any indication in the Estimates just passed that there are any provisions for any substantial increases in wages and salaries which is frightening. The Honourable Member Mr Murray sought to squeeze out of the Minister during that consideration of the Estimates where the provisions were for increases in salaries in 2007. Alas, there is very little hope unless we are expecting some supplementary provision later this year that there is any eminent increase to public servants based on the Estimates that have just been approved in the Appropriation Bill and I would like to think that in the absence of the government yielding, I think, we had suggested that that should pay public servants a month's pay for the hardship of VAT in January. That has been

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rejected. We suggested that there should be a look at the level of the threshold and I seriously think that this amount is minimal in terms of the relief that it would bring to the workers who are facing the impact of these increases. And as my colleague reminded me especially the captive workers like the public servants, teachers, nurses, policemen, members of the disciplines forces, who indeed are the ones who feel the impact of any taxation measure that is introduced; they cannot escape.

In such circumstances, I would have thought that the Minister ... in fact we recommended that one should look at the entire tax system, corporation tax, not only should the income tax threshold be raised, but also that the probably want to look at progressive taxation rather than having this draconian (as I see it) 33½ percent, once you have reached that threshold; so that this Bill which seeks to raise the threshold from \$25,000 to \$28,000 per month merely gives the worker an ease of \$2,000. That is an effect and in such circumstances, you will note that I have put forward an amendment suggesting that at the minimum the threshold should be some \$480,000. That will put the worker, I believe, at come improved position by allowing him to earn \$40,000 per month before the draconian thirty-three percent taxation begins to take effect. I trust that the Minister having examined the realities would be willing to consider this amendment to the legislation which is not being proposed. Unless of course he is about to tell us that while the Estimates do not clearly identify the level of increases for public servants and other categories of public workers that the

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government intends to raise salaries in the vicinity of an excess of sixteen percent for 2007. But even so, with the draconian taxation system of thirty-three percent right across the board, even if workers were to get a significant increase all it means that after \$28,000 with this amendment, they will be paying thirty-three percent back immediately to the State. So really whatever increase you grant one-third of it will be going right back to the Commissioner of the Guyana Revenue Authority.

I therefore rest my case and hope that when it comes to the amendments the Honourable Minister of Finance will let us know his plans in this area, whether the income tax threshold will be reviewed; whether we will be looking at the entire tax system; or whether you will review corporation taxes. What is in place for 2007? What is there to give some comfort to the worker that he will not spend the rest of 2007 in the ...

**The Acting Speaker:** The Honourable Member Mr Khemraj Ramjattan ...

**Mr Khemraj Ramjattan:** I rise to make my intervention in respect of these three amendments to Sections 8, 20 and 60 of the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2007. We must appreciate the points made just now by the Opposition Leader that indeed there is need for an overhaul and a revamping of our entire tax dispensation.

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We had had promises of that but we must also take into consideration that these promises have not realised any vastly different reform excepting of course that which has proven to be very harsh on the ordinary people out there and that is the VAT that which was implemented on 1 January this year.

I had cause in the Budget Debate to state some statistics from the World Bank Climate and Investment Assessment and the Survey at a glance which indicated that taxation in Guyana is extremely draconian to businessmen, to professionals and of course I had cause to be a plaintiff in one such matter the Fiscal Enactment (Amendment) Bill even when I was a member on that side.

Mde Speaker, what we have to do is to ensure that we do not make in this piecemeal fashion this kind of amendment or Income Tax Act whereby we are going to increase that threshold by only \$3,000 per month here rather than do something far more elaborate that can reform the whole system that can lessen the draconian nature of the tax and also to bring some humanity to it. That is what is missing here. And so indeed in a sense concur with the points made by my learned friend and the Opposition Leader - my political colleague that indeed there is need for all of this to happen. But what I want to also add to that there is procedural justice in this new governance that the PPP/C talks about that has to do with not bringing this amendment like they did today. The point was made by the Honourable Member Mr Winston

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Murray, but on behalf of the Alliance For Change I wish to categorically state it and restate it, because only just now we had some things going whereby we wanted the suspension to deal with the vendors' issue and of course that effectively was not dealt with, but they can come here, ask for a suspension and ask that an important piece of legislation to deal with taxes - First Reading - Second Reading - Third Reading - and I just hope that we are going to have the President assenting it, because he has not assented twelve Bills thus far although they had come here. I think two of them were passed - First, Second and Third readings in one day. I just hope that this will be done here. But stop doing that in coming to this Parliament and asking that this has to be done within four/five hours - all three readings.

I also want to make the other point, because just now I ask one of your staff members, please go and get for me, because I feel suspicious somewhat, because I generally read the Official Gazette; I read the one of 2 February; it probably might have slipped me, but I did not read that in the 2 February, there was anything about Income Tax Amendment, but we have in this Bill here No. 10/2007 as if indeed it was printed thereon on 2 February 2007. What did your staff tell me? They indicated to me that they do not have the Official Gazette for 2 February 2007.

*[Interruption]*

**The Acting Speaker:** I was assured by the Clerk that it was gazetted on that date.

**Mr Khemraj Ramjattan:** If the Clerk assures you, I will take that, but I just wanted to find out for myself and I ask for the copy and it was indicated that there is none here now. That could be verified. Indeed if the Clerk verified that, well that should be the position. I was told that they cannot find it.

I want to emphasize this point that whenever they come here they have emergency situations, all the necessary researches that could have gone in to the fact as to whether indeed like the Honourable Member Mr Corbin is saying that there might be within the Estimates that increase that could carry you to \$40,000 per month instead of the \$30,000 now that we could have researched that and come here better prepared for this kind of debate as to the amendment, but the trouble is that we bring it this morning - as a matter of fact this afternoon - at three o'clock I got this ... [*Interruption: 'Recurring decimal!'*] ... it is not a recurring decimal; it is an important point. You just do not bring Bills all the time here and this is happening with a regularity that is abominable. So it is important that we understand that and when it comes to taxation matters; matters that are so important that this not be the position.

I have nothing against the increasing of the threshold level. As a matter of fact I would like it to go to \$50,000 per month. The trouble is that it might be impossible to do that, but the whole idea is that we must get a little more procedural justice in here to the extent that we can

consult and research; to the extent that we could be better prepared.

I just want on behalf of the Alliance For Change to make those points. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

**The Acting Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Finance ...

**Hon Dr Ashni Kumar Singh:** Mde Speaker, if I might perhaps start with the end first on the matter of the procedural issue raised by the Honourable Member Mr Khemraj Ramjattan; I am indeed grateful for your clarification or intervention confirming the Clerk's information to you that this Bill was in fact gazetted on 2 February 2007, because I am, myself aware that the Bill was signed, sent and as my understanding gazetted on that date.

Mde Speaker, we have spent the last week and half debating weighty matters contained in the National Budget and in the spirit of any such debate there have been arguments made, there have been counter arguments made, there have been usual spirits on both sides of the House accompanying this Debate - robust Debate - I am reminded is an appropriate way to describe it. And Mde Speaker, this robust Debate is a good thing; it is befitting a national Budget; it is appropriate; it is necessary and I would say that we went through all of the stages of this

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debate, exchanging our various arguments, disagreeing at times, but I think always in the end, understanding each other's position and I would like to think on the important matters arriving at a meeting of minds.

Mde Speaker, I do not believe that there is anybody in this House and I would say unequivocally that there is anybody in this House on any side who is not concerned about work and welfare; who is not concerned about ensuring that workers enjoy a decent standard of living and improving standard of living. I remain optimistic that this entire House ... and I would like to think that I am right in this regard, but on both sides of this House, there is this interest of this commitment, otherwise I suspect that we would not engage in the kind of animated debate that we do. And I would say equally that during the course of the last week and a half and even if I were to go further back notwithstanding that I have only been in the House for only a few months, I would say that I have seen many positive signs and many good reasons for optimism on a number of important issues; the most perhaps is a good example on a number of important issues we have engaged in heated debates, but we have been merged, unified in the House and we have spoken with the common voice to the people of this country. To me, that is still with much optimism.

In this regard, during the course of this Budget Debate, we discussed issues of affordability; we discussed issues of fiscal constraints; we discussed issues pertaining to

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maintaining macro economic stability and I believe those issues were well ventilated.

I do say, Mde Speaker, that the Government's commitment to address the threshold is perhaps best identified by the fact that this is the second year in succession that the threshold has been adjusted and if we were to look over the space of the last two years, the threshold has moved from \$20,000 to \$25,000 and now to \$28,000 and the Honourable Prime Minister made the point that in fact together those amount to a forty percent increase in the threshold. Mde Speaker, that in my mind, more than anything else, identifies, and it is a manifestation of Government's commitment to addressing the issue.

I would say, as I have said elsewhere that VAT implementation will not be without challenge and we have seen that time has proven that to be the case. Government remains committed to working together with all stakeholders; with all parties in this House and with all stakeholders in the marketplace, consumer groups, private sector groups, et cetera; to make sure that necessary actions are taken; to secure successful and smooth implementation of VAT as we go forward. That is a commitment that has been stated and that is a commitment that we stand by very firmly and I would hasten to add that successful implementation of VAT would present appropriate conditions, I would like to think, for a more comprehensive re-examination of the entire taxation system.

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But Mde Speaker, at this point in time as we speak, we believe that the threshold adjustment proposed that is the income tax threshold adjustment to \$28,000 per month is an appropriate adjustment to make in the contest of the Budget that we have debated. And in that context, Mde Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to commend this Bill once again to this House and to move that it be read a Second time and be passed. [*Applause*]

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a Second time.**

**IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

*Clause 1*

**Question proposed, put and agreed to.**

**Clause 1, as printed, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.**

*Clause 2*

**Question proposed**

**The Chairperson:** The Honourable Member Mr Corbin

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** I move the amendment in my name Mde Chairperson. I think it has been circulated in the short space of time that was available by deleting \$360,000 to \$480,000. In all the relevant sections, we really did not have time to do the amendments; if accepted there might be some minor corrections in all the other sections.

Seconded by Mr Winston S Murray MP

Amendment -

Delete the words *three hundred and thirty six thousand dollars* and replace them with the words *four hundred and eighty thousand dollars*

**Amendment proposed, put and negatived.**

Question that -

Clause 2 as printed stands part of the Bill

**Put and agreed to.**

**Clause 2, as printed, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.**

*Clause 3*

**Question proposed, put and agreed to.**

**Clause 3, as printed, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.**

*Clause 4*

**Question proposed, put and agreed to.**

**Clause 4, as printed agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.**

**Assembly Resumed**

**Bill reported without amendment, read the third time and passed as printed.**

**The Acting Speaker:** Honourable Members, this concludes all the business that we have for today. For this entire session, I must thank you for your cooperation where it was provided. I know we had some roller-coaster times - up and down - but we are at the end of a long session now. I must thank you all for bearing with me in all my rulings.

## EXPRESSION OF THANKS

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mde Speaker, if I may crave your indulgence, I should say, except for a brief few words. Mde Speaker, we on this side of the House would like to extend our congratulations to you [*Applause*] for the way you conducted both the Budget Debate and the Sessions of the Committee of Supply and as you said there were indeed some roller-coaster sessions, but I believe you. But you chartered the course quite well as the first time in your tenure as the Deputy Speaker.

Mde Speaker, over the last eight days MPs from both sides worked hard, both in terms of the preparation for their presentations, questions and answers, some of which were rather gruelling sessions and I think we all know who got the blunt of the questions and who got the benefit of the answers.

Mde Speaker, I believe that we should also place on record our deepest gratitude and appreciation to the technical staff of our respective Ministries, [*Applause*] who so ably provided support to their respective Ministers. Our deepest gratitude also goes out to the Clerk of the National Assembly and his hard-working staff for the services provided to both Opposition and Government benches.

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The Media also should not be omitted for conveying to the general public the seriousness of the debates that took place in this Honourable House.

Mde Speaker, we have endured eight hard working days and I believe that we have indeed earned our keep. Accountability - I am sure that the Honourable Member Mrs Deborah Backer would agree that accountability would be the hallmark of the sessions during the Committee of Supply, where answers were fulsome and the Opposition of course tried to tire us down, but instead of doing that we tire them down. *[Laughter]*

Mde Speaker, with these few words, I wish to move that the House stands adjourn to a date to be fixed.

**The Acting Speaker:** The House stands adjourned to a date to be fixed.

*Adjourned Accordingly at 20:17H*